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The Anatomical Theatre at Leiden by Willem Swannenburg, after J. C. Woudanus: an illustration from *Poeta and the Visual Arts in Renaissance England* by Norman K. Farmer, Jr (122pp. University of Texas Press, \$19.95, 0 292 78711 1), to be reviewed in a future issue of the *TLS*.

The legal and the moral

David Lyons

H. L. A. HART
Essays in Jurisprudence and Philosophy
396pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £17.50
(paperback, £7.50).
019 8253877

A typical product of human genius, law is a mixed blessing. It can secure freedom, even against encroachments by those in power, and marshal resources to conquer disease, feed the hungry, house the homeless and offer hope to the downtrodden. But it can also forge our shackles, enforce slavery, channel millions into gas ovens and promote nuclear devastation. All that is familiar enough. But those who theorize about the law often seem blind to such painful facts. With few exceptions, those who best and most consistently appreciate the fallibility of law work within the school of legal theory known as positivism.

Legal positivism is founded on two principal ideas: law is a matter of empirical fact, and it must be distinguished from morality. The first idea seems clear enough: law is an aspect of social life, rooted in human decisions and bounded by political institutions. It may be studied systematically, by the techniques of empirical science. The second idea is troublesome; it is easily caricatured, corrupted, or misunderstood, even by those who style themselves positivists. Thus some positivists who are sceptics about the rational tenability of moral judgments believe that what is right or wrong, just or unjust cannot be a matter of empirical fact and conclude that law, which is fact, cannot be interpreted in moral terms. They cannot begin to understand laws that lay down moral standards for private or official conduct, such as fairness or due care.

Such theories are unfaithful to the guiding spirit of legal positivism. The idea that law is distinguishable from morality does not mean that it cannot be shaped by moral principle, but rather that we should not confuse the law that we actually have with law as it ought to be. If a lawyer does not distinguish the two, he is likely to provide poor counsel. More important, sound social criticism and politically responsible conduct require that we avoid wishful thinking about the law. Law is just an artefact. It can be constructed well or badly and put to good or evil uses. This perception at the core of traditional positivism does not combine well with moral scepticism, for it assumes that sound appraisals of law and of conduct in a political context are possible.

Such a view was championed by the founders of British legal positivism, Jeremy Bentham and John Austin. It inspires the work of positivism's contemporary standard-bearer, the distinguished legal theorist H. L. A. Hart. Like his predecessors, Hart has studied not only the nature of law but also the standards by which it may be evaluated and he has applied his analytical skills and moral insight to complex issues of social policy and conscientious conduct.

Like positivists before him, Hart's theoretical work is informed by the general philosophical insights of his own time. He would thus be classified as an "analytic" philosopher - a characterization with both wide and narrow meanings. In its broader sense, "analytic philosophy" denotes an approach that places a premium on clear ideas and rigorous argument. Philosophy is meant to solve problems, not to provide solace or mystical visions. In its narrower sense, "analytic philosophy" stands for the notion that philosophical perplexities result from the ways in which we formulate ideas about the world and our place within it. Language divides up reality in more or less arbitrary ways and generates puzzles that need to be dissolved (rather than solved) by careful study of what we do with words.

Hart's work is "analytic" in both senses, as is evident in this new collection of essays he has previously published. Perplexities that can be resolved by attention to our use of language are the focus of the first and last pieces in this volume. His inaugural lecture as Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford (the earliest essay, dating from 1953) seeks a way of understanding perplexing ideas like that of a right and a corporation; and his illuminating study of criminal attempts (the most recent essay, pub-

lished in 1981) shows us how to avoid the House of Lords's confusion about "attempting the impossible". But while Hart values the help of linguistic analysis, he acknowledges its limitations - a matter he takes up in his modest and informative introduction. The linguistic emphasis is indeed less important to the other fifteen essays.

It is worth remarking on some of the consequences of Hart's linguistic emphasis. His masterly contribution to general jurisprudence is *The Concept of Law* (published in 1961), which still serves as a benchmark for legal theory. Beginning with criticisms of the classic positivist idea that laws are orders backed by threats delivered by the uncommanded commanders within a community, and refining insights and distinctions suggested by other theorists, Hart constructs a general theory about the nature of law and legal systems in terms of a "union" of rules that restrict behaviour and rules that authorize official action such as law-creation and adjudication. He investigates the complex relations between law and moral standards and tackles the vexing problem of international law. In between these two main segments of that work, Hart provides a theoretical foundation for the plausible and now widely accepted notion that any system of

law is capable at any time of deciding some but not all of the cases that arise within it, with the consequence that judicial law-creation is sometimes but not always necessary. Hart thus develops and defends a moderate position between the theoretical extremes of "formalism" (which claims that a system of law always provides an answer to every legal question that arises, so that judicial law-making is never necessary) and "rule scepticism" (which holds that law never provides sufficient guidance for deciding cases, so that judicial law-making is always needed).

Hart's theory about the limited but inevitable occasions for judicial law-making, which he terms the "open texture" of law, is based on a theory about the meanings of general words, which are held to be "open textured" or unavoidably somewhat vague. Rules of law derive their meaning from the words used in their authoritative formulations, words whose meanings are determined by linguistic conventions within a community. These conventions are rooted in widespread agreement about cases to which the words apply, and they leave room for borderline cases. When a judge must decide whether to regard an ordinance that prohibits vehicles from public parks as excluding motor-cars, the unequivocal answer is pro-

vided by linguistic conventions. But the conventions are no help in some cases. Hart's example is "a toy motor-car electrically propelled": to decide whether the ordinance excludes such a problematic "vehicle" from the public parks, a judge is obliged to make new law because the meaning of the existing law is no more determinate than the meaning of the general word "vehicle". A judge then has "discretion" to "make a choice" between "open alternatives".

This linguistic emphasis underestimates the constraints surrounding judicial decision-making. (Hart corrects the over-emphasis somewhat in the third essay in this volume.) Judges are expected to decide even novel or "hard" cases by reference to existing law, "proceeding by analogy so as to ensure that the new law they make is in accordance with principles or underlying reasons which can be recognized as already having a footing in existing law". But this modest concession is inadequate, for several reasons.

In the first place, Hart's discussion of a responsible judicial approach to hard cases goes little further than his reference to reasoning "by analogy", which is itself rather vague. If there is a major gap within his legal theory, it is the failure to discuss the possibility of a clear, systematic and rigorous method for deciding hard cases, one that might reasonably claim to find sufficient guidance in existing law. Hart is hardly unaware of recent proposals along these lines, for he takes issue (more than once in this volume) with claims attributed to Ronald Dworkin based on his theory of hard cases, and he is almost certainly familiar with the comparable theory developed by Neil MacCormick (who allies himself with Hart's general approach to legal theory and has written a book-length study of Hart's work). Hart seems minnily concerned to deny that law is always capable of deciding novel cases. In view of current developments, however, this conclusion seems premature.

In the second place, Hart's theory of linguistic meaning is itself problematic. It is arguable that in many cases the relevant sort of meaning is not given simply by conventions that Hart had in mind - the sort of meaning that connects words with things outside of language. How are we to understand, for example, what happens when chemists discover that water is H₂O? It is arguable that such scientific developments involve the determination that the stuff referred to, more or less reliably, by our use of the word "water" is constituted in a certain way. This has implications for decisions in hard cases: such a discovery provides principled grounds for drawing factual lines, and therefore legal lines when they depend on such facts, even when linguistic conventions are unclear.

This possibility is especially important when law explicitly employs moral language, which may turn out to be less "vague" than legal theorists commonly assume. If a law requires that a "fair hearing" be held before certain benefits are withdrawn, hard cases can arise concerning whether that requirement has been satisfied by a hearing that has been held. Hart's theory implies that what counts as fairness is a matter of linguistic convention and equally indeterminate. But this neglects the possibility (concerning which currently there is renewed philosophical interest) that what constitutes fairness is something to be determined by sound moral and philosophical argument and thus something that may be discovered even when linguistic conventions are unclear. If that were so, then Hart's approach of referring to social conventions might lead courts to decide some cases wrongly, placing too much reliance on conventional attitudes; and some cases that Hart would regard as undecidable on the basis of existing law might well be decidable by reference to a sound theory of what constitutes fairness in hearings.

Hart's reliance on linguistic regularities sometimes leads him more radically astray. Parallel to his notion that legal rights and obligations are the creatures of legal rules is his claim that moral rights and obligations are the products of a special subclass of social rules; determined by a wide social consensus concerning the corresponding values. The upshot of this claim - which may well not be acceptable to Hart - is an extreme form of moral conventionalism concerning rights and obligations

Familiar

Eighty four years dead, younger than I am,
Your hair still full red, you take your medicine.
The Wesleyan Vicar had brought flowers.
The Catholic Priest whisky. A lifted glass —

So the fungal root and pale petal
Of tuberculosis
Raised a last bloom. I imagine your breathed
"Rocked In The Cradle Of The Deep" —

My father is hardly four. You are forty,
Already an old salt of the dyer's vat.
Near eighty your daughter stirred my tea;
Dug up and turned over this and that

Heirloom bit of ghost
Under your Grace Darling heaving at the oars
Among mountainous, tenebrous foam.
Now I stand right there. And large as life

You step out of Stubbing Wharf Pub
(Like my father?) I can't see your face.
I see you pause. (Like me?) I see you squirt
Down at your fob. It slips from your hand. And you punt it

Along the canal bank — all the way home.
Time scramble. Now you're getting numb,
Chin-deep in the canal, clinging to grass.
Granny (she's already trotted past you)

Told at the pub you've gone, finds you, strips you,
Rubs you dry, wraps you in a blanket, sets you
By the fire. In the blink of an eye you're away —
Back in the Stubbing Wharf — shrouded — singing —

Fading
Into such a blank negative
Your burial left not a trace.
Even the grave's lost.

In the sour, sodden, rubbly dirt
Of the Calder crevasse, you escaped
Granny's Victorian blacks, church blocks, the labour
Of the valley conscience.

Yet I'm proof
You've come through alive.
You move a hand.
And now, as I touch at your elegy, sweep
The phrases aside.

Peer deeper
Into my misty mirror of paper.

TED HUGHES

The Elizabethan media-man

Emrys Jones

CHARLES NICHOLL
A Cup of News: The life of Thomas Nashe
342pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £14.95.
07100 95171

which are independent of the law. Hart is thus committed to the view that if it is generally agreed that a wife is under an obligation to defer to the wishes of her husband, that consensus makes the widespread moral conviction true and renders false any opinion to the contrary. This implausible result does not flow simply from Hart's theory of language, however, for in this case he has failed to distinguish between two different kinds of linguistic regularity – those that constitute moral concepts (what is implicit in the general idea of being under an obligation) and those that represent the conventional application of those concepts and thus reflect widespread but none the less questionable moral attitudes.

This rather extreme example of linguistic analysis gone wrong is worth noting especially because the results are so incongruent with Hart's more characteristic treatment of moral issues. One of his most consistent concerns (reflected in four essays in this volume) is the appraisal of moral positions and their application to public policy. In those contexts, Hart deals with matters of moral principle as issues within what he calls "critical morality", which he distinguishes significantly from "positive" (or conventional) morality. An especially relevant feature of his reflective moral view is the conviction that it makes good sense to suppose that there are universal moral rights, which do not depend on legal or less formal social recognition, and which may be used in the appraisal of government policy and social institutions. In this respect, of course, Hart deviates from Bentham, who professed to make no sense at all of claims about any non-legal rights.

The differences between Hart and Bentham go deeper than disagreement about the nature of law and the fundamental principles of morality. Hart may be considered a philosophical empiricist, broadly speaking, but his commitment to grounding philosophical views upon observational facts is not coupled with the typical empiricist tendency towards reductionism. His work is informed by a healthy respect for the complexities of both law and morality. And yet he avoids the opposite temptation to multiply distinctions beyond necessity. He rejects Bentham's attempt to reduce all laws to coercive commands, but he finds an ample corrective in the distinction between "primary" and "secondary" rules (rules that restrict behaviour and that confer authority on officials, respectively). He rejects the utilitarian attempt to reduce all moral factors to considerations concerning the aggregate general welfare, as well as the alternative attempt to construct a moral theory out of very limited rights; he is prepared to accept utility and rights as independent principles. But Hart never rejects the reductionist project out of hand; he always gives serious, careful consideration to the available arguments. The upshot is a paradigm of philosophical reasonableness.

The engraving essays in this worthwhile collection range widely, from an abstract, seemingly technical study on the possibility of "self-referring laws" (which turns out to be of importance in the development of South African law) to sensitive, sympathetic studies of major theorists. Apart from the piece on ordinal attempts, the essays are set in groups labelled: General Theory (which includes Hart's famous Holmes lecture on "the separation of law and morals"); one of the most important and substantial essays ever written in the field of legal philosophy, and one that rewards many readings; American Jurisprudence (in which Dworkin and Llewellyn figure prominently); Scandinavian Jurisprudence (especially Alf Ross and Kelsen); Liberty, Utility and Rights (which discuss Bentham, Mill, Nozick, Rawls and Lord Devlin); and Four Legal Theorists (Jhering, Holmes, Kelsen and Fuller).

Hart is an impressive scholar: careful and judicious, capable of close textual analysis but never preoccupied with trivialities, alive to constructive possibilities, always insightfully critical. His style is graceful, his manner gracious. In these respects too he departs from Bentham.

If humanity survives into the next century and the intellectual history of our times is written, we shall fare well in the judgement of our grandchildren if Hart's work figures prominently in their appraisals, as it should.

A book calling itself *The Life of Thomas Nashe* is unlikely to be quite what it says. Nashe himself, the man as opposed to his writings, simply hasn't survived in sufficient documentary bulk to support a book-length biography, certainly not one as amply proportioned as this. In his classic edition of Nashe (1910), R. B. McKerrow supplied a biographical account which is still adequate on most matters, but it filled not much more than thirty pages, many of which even so were taken up with conjecture and quotation. No one can have spent longer contemplating Nashe than McKerrow, but for him a book on Nashe's life was not a feasible project. And so he began with a gloomy warning about the "paucity of material" and the "almost inevitably disappointing results" of any attempt to write a new life. As he went on to explain, the essential material was of three kinds: a few references to Nashe in official documents; a number of autobiographical statements in Nashe's own works; and some statements about him, often of doubtful veracity, in the publications of his declared enemies Gabriel Harvey and Richard Lichfield. It might be possible to construct a narrative of sorts from these scraps, though one with many lacunae; what was out of the question was a convincingly fleshed-out literary portrait, a picture of the man in his daily environment of the kind we expect of most literary biographies. But this could hardly be attempted for such an elusive low-life Elizabethan as Thomas Nashe.

In *A Cup of News* Charles Nicholl seems to have taken up McKerrow's words about "paucity of material" as a challenge to his ingenuity and resourcefulness. Despite all the obstacles, he decided to write not just a biographical essay but a 300-page life, and he has, on the whole, handsomely succeeded. A former journalist himself, he brings to Nashe a strong sympathy for one who has often been called the first English journalist; he has done, moreover, a great deal of scholarly preparation. The situation with regard to the facts of Nashe's doings and whereabouts has changed in numerous small ways since McKerrow and Nicholl makes full use of later scholarship to correct or amplify McKerrow's account. When, for instance, Nashe wrote the first draft of *The Terrors of the Night*, he remarked that he was "in the Countrey some three score myle off from London". Exactly where this was, was unknown to McKerrow. Using the work of C. G. Harlow, Nicholl fills out the picture by showing that Nashe was very probably staying at the country house of the antiquarian Robert Cotton at Conington in Huntingdonshire. Nicholl goes on to describe not only Cotton himself but his damp, depressing house and the marshy, insalubrious landscape outside Nashe's window. Circumstantiality of this kind is what Nashe's biographer is often without, and Nicholl makes the most of what there is.

This is the point at which McKerrow's method and Nicholl's diverge. Whereas McKerrow stayed soberly close to the ascertainable facts, Nicholl opts for what the rhetoricians of Nashe's time would have called "amplification". Every stray detail is seized upon and given the Nicholl treatment – a feature-writer's technique which systematically turns each fact into a topic and makes each topic palpable to the imagination. McKerrow at one point ventured a cautious speculation: "It might, I think, be argued that a certain interest which Nashe shows in fishermen and in sailors suggests that he may have passed some time with his mother's relations at Lowestoft, or at any rate that he had seen something of the sea since he left it at the age of six. But this is of course mere conjecture." McKerrow's remark gives Nicholl his cue for one of his characteristic excursions:

Throughout his life, Nashe spoke with rare respect of fishermen. . . . He is moved by the struggle of those who "live under the yoke of the sea, or have their heads washed with his bubbly spume". He knows the harsh lot of the sailor, who "lies in brines", is "a miserable lick of the scurvy" and eats a "hungry

feast of Dogs & Cats, or Haberdine and poore John at the most". He is casually at home with nautical terms: "haling of bollings yare", "spreading their drabled sails in the full clue abroad"; "from the oerleope into the hold"; "a round sickle fastened in the tacklings for skippers the better to climb by". The germs of all this are here in Lowestoft.

And so on. Nicholl expands McKerrow by assembling a collage of phrases from *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* and *Leinen Stuffs* so as to throw light not just on Nashe's presumed childhood experiences but, more conjecturally, on his consciousness throughout life. Nicholl says, for instance, that Nashe is "moved" by the fishermen's struggles. Strictly speaking, however, this is Nicholl's inference from Nashe's exuberant rhetoric: he may have been not moved at all but merely agreeably stimulated by a congenial theme. Unwarranted inferences of this kind are liberally strewn throughout the book. They make for liveliness – and the book is at all times easy to read – but they don't necessarily make for the truth about Nashe.

The course traced by Nashe during his thirty-three years divides into three obvious stages: childhood in Suffolk and Norfolk, the student years at Cambridge and the final ten years in the Elizabethan Grub Street where he struggles to keep afloat before finally sinking without trace. Nicholl negotiates each stage through a series of set pieces, either on the places where Nashe lived or stayed or on the persons with whom he came into contact. When there is nothing to tell of Nashe – one chapter is called "A Silence" – the background becomes foreground, and the "milieu" takes over perforce the space that should be occupied by the central figure. There are sketches of literary associates like Greene, Lyly and Marlowe (all of whom look interestingly different from usual, viewed as they are here from Nashe's angle), of enemies like the Harvey brothers and of benefactors who briefly protected Nashe and gave him hospitality, as Whitgift and Bancroft did at Croydon, or as Sir George Carey did at Carisbrooke on the Isle of Wight. These sketches are very competently done and make the reader feel he is going on a densely circumstanced conducted tour through the 1590s. We push our way through a crowd of hack writers, printers, Recusants, university dons, court hangers-on, spies and informers. The book's feeling for the period – and particularly for the London of the 1590s – is strong and accurate.

On literary matters, however, Nicholl can be oddly uncertain. He is vague and second-hand on Marlowe and falls back on journalistic ("The poetry is extraordinary . . . and must have made an immediate impact on all who read it") or on phrases taken from A. L. Rowse which are scarcely worth borrowing. (*Tamburlaine* has "barbaric splendour" and *Hero and Leander* "enamelled perfection".) Usually sharp and knowing, Nicholl becomes strangely helpless when confronted with actual works of literature. And although he can rebuke other scholars for overstepping the bounds of the evidence, he himself does so quite unabashedly when it suits him – as when he proposes that the unnamed "Gentleman" who mediated between Nashe and Gabriel Harvey was actually none other than Shakespeare. There is no evidence whatever to connect Shakespeare with this episode, and in any case it seems unlikely that in 1593 Shakespeare would have been referred to as a "Gentleman", a term which denoted a social rank distinctly higher than that of a "player". On Nashe's medical history too Nicholl pronounces with a rash over-confidence. At the time of writing *Christ's Tears*, Nicholl tells us, Nashe was going through an acute personal crisis: "What one is witnessing . . . is an actual nervous breakdown . . . some real and harrowing crack-up". This may or may not be so; there's simply not enough to go on. But an incautious reader of this book might well take it that Nashe's "breakdown" is now an established fact. It is not by any means established, and Nicholl might have made clearer the purely conjectural nature of his comment.

Conjecture runs riot in the chapter called "Master Moth". This discussion of *Love's Labour's Lost* joins those others which have offered to elucidate the allegedly "topical" texture of Shakespeare's comedy. Nicholl here gives a quite misleading account of current

Shakespearean scholarship on the play. He claims to know not only the play's date but even for whom it was first performed: "It is almost certain that Shakespeare put on *Love's Labour's Lost* for Southampton and his guests during the Christmas festivities of 1593-4". But as Alfred Harbage said in the Pelican Shakespeare: "the majority of present-day scholars believe that *Love's Labour's Lost* was originally written about 1594-5" – though Harbage favoured an earlier date in 1588-9. More recent editors (Riverside, New Penguin) propose "about 1595". Whatever the truth about the date – and some of his theories depend on it – Nicholl should not pretend that there is no problem. But his chief argument concerns Nashe, in which he follows Dover Wilson; for Nicholl as for Wilson "the character of Moth is an unmistakable portrait" of Nashe. Unmistakable it is certainly not. In 1593 (to allow Nicholl his dating for the moment), Nashe was a man of twenty-six, tough-minded, aggressive, nervy if not neurotic (according to Nicholl's reading), with an unsurpassed gift for vituperation and the deployment of "low" imagery. Moth, on the other hand, is a perky clever little page, in the tradition of Lyly's court comedies, who is addressed in his first scene as "dear imp", "my tender juvenile", "thou pretty, because little", "sweet my child", "well-educated infant" and so on. Nashe may have seemed young for his years and have had only a scanty beard, and the word "nash" or "nesh" may have meant "tender", "soft" etc. But these and other such "facts" still don't add up to good reasons for identifying the child Moth with the man Nashe. In any case I don't believe that Shakespeare portrayed his contemporaries in the simple and naive way Nicholl proposes. Certainly Shakespeare must have been much struck by Nashe's highly original vision and diction and was probably influenced by both; in his most elaborate speech Moth himself uses what sounds very like a Nashean idiom. But it is a mistake to convert these literary facts into an excuse for identification games of the kind played by Dover Wilson and others; it confuses the really important issue, which is that in the mid-1590s Nashe was becoming a literary force to be reckoned with.

The scale of this biography is itself a tribute to the increased critical esteem in which Nashe is now held. He is no longer confined to those academic readers with access to McKerrow's library edition; easily available in paperback, he is now read more widely than ever before – and not just as a quarry for social historians but as an imaginative writer of intense personal flavour. Not one of his works, taken singly, may be an accepted classic, but his way of writing, his pouncing, wiredrawn, improvisatory eloquence, amounts to a classic style. Nashe was in advance of his age: a media-man before the media had been set up (does any writer before him use the phrase "about town"?), he could never find the form which suited him, so that all his "pamphlets" become loose baggy monsters made to accommodate whatever it was that he happened to want to say. Texture not structure, process not product, the moment's immediacy not the long-term aim, are what matters – the phrase, the odd sentence, the description of place or person, the excited worked-up set piece like Calio's execution in *The Unfortunate Traveller* or the Hero and Leander pastiche in *Leinen Stuffs*. This means that he is best dipped into, or read in extracts; hypnotic in short passages, he is tedious to read at length. In fact the boyishness which was noted by his contemporaries is an essential quality of his literary personality and finally dictates our sense of his limitations as a writer. After a long immersion in Nashe, the reader wears of the perpetual phrase-making, the cheeky urchin stance, the preposterous violence, and hungers for *mind* – for form, control, meaning, that real complexity of posture which is also compatible with simplicity. Compared with, say, Thomas More, perhaps the deepest mind in sixteenth-century England, Nashe can seem no more than a sensibility, though a brilliant and richly quirky one. If not precisely Shakespeare's Moth in the way Mr Nicholl wants us to believe, in literary terms Nashe clearly did remain something of a child – a University Wit who, though he moved on from the university, never quite emerged from his intellectual adolescence.

The nicotine pushers

Paul Smith

PETER TAYLOR
Smoke Ring: The politics of tobacco
329pp. Bodley Head. £9.95.
0370 305132

"Nothing has been so noticeable in the letters from the front as the insistent requests for tobacco and cigarettes", wrote *The Times* of November 4, 1914. You can still find the brass boxes in which Princess Mary's Sailors and Soldiers' Christmas fund despatched emergency supplies of the weed to every man on active service. Apparently there were special gifts for non-smokers, but those were clearly for an eccentric minority. The defence of the British Empire needed nicotine. Yet, if Peter Taylor is right, smoking accounts for far more of the global casualty list in this century than war. It's the Marlboro cowboy who guns you down, even if the Colt carries a filter and the bullets are low tar. There is little dispute about the evidence linking smoking with cancer and with heart and respiratory diseases. The tobacco industry's polemical parry – that the precise mechanism by which cigarettes cause disease has never been demonstrated – is an attempt to impose an impossible standard of proof that even its own scientists hardly see as relevant.

The medical machine

J. F. Watkins

LEWIS THOMAS
The Youngest Science: Notes of a medicine-watcher
276pp. Oxford University Press. £12.50.
0192177354

This book, one of a series sponsored by the Sloan Foundation in which distinguished scientists discuss their work for the general reader, is modestly subtitled "Notes of a Medicine-Watcher". The medicine-watcher in question is no less a personage than the Chancellor of the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, a member of the National Academy of Sciences who has fought many a famous campaign on the battlefields of medical research and of medical and academic administration from Guam to New York and Yale. "Notes" is the wrong word to describe this collection of twenty-two brilliant autobiographical essays, each of which is concerned with some stage of Lewis Thomas's march from his childhood as the son of a general practitioner in Flushing, New York, to the eminence he now enjoys.

The picture of Thomas's father's life as an impecunious small-town doctor recalls not only a pattern of life which has gone for ever but also the honesty, decency, and sympathy with which, his son argues, have largely disappeared with it. Thomas points out that the hospital patient feels like "a working part of an immense, automated apparatus", and regrets that the "close-up, reassuring, warm touch of the physician" is disappearing from the practice of medicine. But then again, was it ever there? Was Molière's opinion of doctors more accurate? While it may be debated whether cold-heartedness results from increased medical efficiency or is a characteristic of society as a whole, there does seem to be a causal connection between medical efficiency and bureaucratic inefficiency, probably because the increased cost of medical practice produces a larger administrative apparatus to count the money. The appalling inefficiency of the National Health Service bureaucracy arises largely from the fact that everyone in it is reluctant to take decisions. Thomas's account of the awful problems at the great New York hospital, Bellevue, where he was Chairman of Medicine, could be repeated for almost any hospital in the National Health Service. The annual budget from New York City for Bellevue was more than sufficient for its needs, but every request for even minor expenditures had to be "threated through anonymous bureaucrats". Thomas's heroic campaign to remedy this ended in failure.

His chapter on the governance of a university should be read by every Vice-Chancellor and Medical School Dean. Modern universi-

ties generate their own cancerous bureaucratic growths and ambitious administrators must constantly be tempted to use them to stamp their own personalities on the institutions over which they preside. Such busy men should pin this sentence of Thomas's on their office walls: "The function of the administration is solely to see that the funds are adequate for the university's purposes and not overspent, that the air is right, that the grounds are tidy – and then to stay out of its way."

Thomas provides a clear, comprehensible account of exactly how medical research is carried on, especially in his own field of experimental pathology. He gives several examples of the way in which notable scientific results may arise from unscientific origins. The extraordinary story of the Tracking Mice, for example, which may have strange implications for transplantation and even for the understanding of human relationships, started with a "mild biological joke" which Thomas made in an address to an Immunology Congress. These mice were trained by Thomas and his colleagues to distinguish between the smells of two other mice, one genetically identical with the tracker, the other differing only at the gene locus controlling graft rejection. Mating preference in mice also seems to involve this ability to recognize individuals by their smell. Human beings, too, have marker smells, to judge from the ability of tracker dogs to distinguish one individual's smell from another. The question arises whether we recognize each other by smell, possibly at an unconscious level. Thomas hopes not, "social life being complicated enough as it is".

The Youngest Science should appeal to a wide readership, not only as the best account available of the present state of medicine, but also for the picture it gives of a remarkable and interesting member of the profession.

Whitman wrote of "the grandeur and exquisiteness of old age". Most elderly people, suggest B. F. Skinner and M. E. Vaughan in *Enjoy Old Age: A Program of Self-Management* (157pp. Hutchinson. £6.95. 0 09 156110), will at some time have wondered what he was talking about. Failing senses rarely admit "grandeur"; more likely the old will be seen as "selfish, stingy, crotchety and many other unpleasant things". The two authors have set out to write a book for elderly readers about facing up to old age which, while it does not deny the natural disadvantages, insists that they need not be shameful. A brief glossary for those unfamiliar with Skinner's behavioural terminology (though it is employed lightly) is provided, and the advice administered is frequently practical; "Remember that the mugger has the advantage; give in if you want to live to be mugged another day."

and when they do can expect to encounter well financed and orchestrated opposition. Taylor describes the difficulties experienced by both Labour and Conservative ministers in Britain and by members of the Carter and Reagan administrations in the United States in trying to tighten control of the advertising and promotion that form the softening-up barrage of the tobacco industry's assault on the consumer, especially perhaps the "young starter". To the extent that the industry has succeeded in its tactic of shifting the argument over regulation from grounds of health to those of freedom, it has been an automatic beneficiary, as well as a keen helper, of the advent of governments in Britain and the USA pledged to reduce state interference. "I can guarantee", candidate Reagan told North Carolina tobacco farmers, "that my own Cabinet members will be far too busy with substantive matters to waste their time proselytizing against the dangers of cigarette smoking".

Taylor is well stocked with facts, and his presentation, if partisan, avoids shrillness and intolerance. This is good investigative-cum-crusading journalism, with only the occasional flicker of unfairness or of slackness in documentation (why quote Arthur Schlesinger's *A Thousand Days* second-hand from an "un-sourced" article, when it is easy to consult the original?). Yet Taylor's conclusions as to how the "Smoke Ring" might be broken do not get us very far. He believes it is up to governments to lead the way by attacking cigarette advertising and promotion, perhaps on the Finnish model, and seems to approve of an Australian organization known as BUGA UP whose members deface cigarette advertisements with aerosol sprays (one hopes they don't inhale). What he does not address is the problem of how the political and economic obstacles are to be sur-

mounted and of how the peculiar psychological mechanism and the specific ethical viewpoint which allow acquiescence in a death-dealing enterprise can be overcome.

It is the capacity on the part of people who are not criminals or lunatics at the same time to know what smoking does and to promote or pursue or condone it that makes the "Smoke Ring" possible and forms the most troubling feature of Taylor's evidence. When Brown & Williamson, planning a new image for their high-tar "Viceroy" cigarette, were faced with research indicating that smokers often realized that their behaviour was "illogical, irrational and stupid", their objective became to eliminate the misgivings. "The marketing efforts must cope with consumers' attitudes about smoking and health, either providing them a rationale for smoking a full flavour VICEROY or providing a means of repressing their concerns about smoking a full flavour VICEROY." Yet those who tirelessly engage for profit in the business of persuading people to hurt themselves are not monsters. The executives of Philip Morris probably believe that "Good corporate citizenship is not an afterthought but an active concern in everything we do". If Taylor had been able to explain how they believe it, he might have been better placed to suggest how both they and the rest of society could be weaned from the vice. The corporate drug pusher's defence lies in the assertion of the liberty of the individual to choose to risk doing himself harm, a principle which will cover anything from heroin to hang-gliding. How far and in which cases a "free society" should accept that principle is a genuine moral question which Taylor barely examines. The fact that it is sometimes cynically exploited does not deprive it of importance or make its resolution obvious.

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Secker & Warburg

Melancholically, with Clara

Judith Chernaik

ROBERT SCHUMANN
Tagebücher, Band III:
Haushaltbücher, 1837-1856
Volume 1, 1837-1847; Volume 2, 1847-1856
Edited by Gerd Nauhaus
956pp. Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für
Musik, DDR45M the set.

For most of his adult years, Schumann kept a meticulous record of his daily life, an exercise in prose autobiography which runs parallel to the extravagant and fanciful self-portraiture of his music. The first volume of his youthful *Tagebücher*, 1827-38 (published in 1971) included journals of his student travels, quotations from favourite authors (with a heavy dose of Jean Paul), Robert's own reflections on life and art, his literary and musical projects, and whimsical accounts of student life in Heidelberg and Leipzig: friendships, love affairs, drinking bouts and the resulting *Katzenjammer*. The early Leipzig diaries take Schumann through the first meetings with Friedrich Wieck and his gifted nine-year-old daughter Clara, the creation of the *Deviations*, the founding of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, and the writing of *Papillons*, *Carnaval*, the *Études Symphoniques*, and the three piano sonatas.

Now we have two volumes of *Haushaltbücher*, far more sober in content than the self-consciously literary *Tagebücher*, and different in purpose. Apart from the first notebook, begun in 1837 possibly in order to convince himself and Wieck of his financial sobriety, these cover the years of Schumann's married life, and are primarily a record of income and expenses, mainly the latter, with notes of visits made and received, the inception and progress of musical compositions, Clara's pregnancies, the birth of each child (in fourteen years there were eight children, one of whom died in infancy, and at least two miscarriages, greeted in the later years with manifest relief by Clara). There are regular notes on Robert's health, on Clara's health (one entry reads: "Hypochondrie zweier Ehegatten"), country walks, birthday celebrations and, from 1846 on, a record of sexual intimacy. A marginal semiquaver signifies intercourse two or three times a week, with a month's grace after each of Clara's confinements, up until two weeks before Schumann's attempted suicide in February 1854.

The *Haushaltbücher* are Volume Three of the collected diaries; Volume Two, including the *Ehe-tagebücher* kept jointly by husband and wife for the first four years of their marriage, is to be published in 1986. Some of this material has been published before, in partial or inaccurate versions, and in works long out of print. But when the edition is complete, it will provide for the first time comprehensive documentation of a life which is romantically interesting for nineteenth-century Romanticism.

Like the *Tagebücher*, the *Haushaltbücher* have been scrupulously edited and annotated, with a full descriptive glossary of persons and places. The annotation inspires confidence that no scrap of published or unpublished evidence bearing on Schumann's life and work has been left unexamined, from reminiscences of friends and colleagues to details of Clara's concert programmes. Yet, inevitably, mysteries remain unsolved: for instance, whether the "Christel" who worked for the Schumanns for the first two years of their marriage (receiving extremely generous final wages on her departure) might have been the same Christel, *Deviations* name: "Charitas", from whom Schumann appears to have contracted syphilis ten years earlier, according to his 1831 "Leipzig Lebensbuch", and who seems to have been a servant in Wieck's house while Robert was his favourite lodger and pupil.

Although Schumann's relations with a wide circle of fellow musicians have been well documented, the brief diary entries shed new light on particular friendships. There are daily visits to Liszt when he comes to Leipzig on tour; his playing is "heavenly", but he sulks in bed the next day, "verdrüsslich". Mendelssohn is a daily companion, and fellow billiards player, but Robert's reverence for him is tempered always by self-doubt: so that it is a joy to note Mendelssohn's "sehr freundliche Worte"

after one of Clara's concerts. The Dresden diaries, 1845-50, suggest that Schumann had closer relations with Wagner than had been assumed; although Schumann did not join Wagner on the barricades during the May 1849 revolution (he fled for safety to a friend's country estate), he interwove a few bars of the "Marseillaise" in the last of his four "barricade marches", finished "with great joy" on June 15.

As a record of his working life, the diaries mark a change from the years before his marriage, when creative impulses seemed to flow almost faster than he could set them down in the forms he plainly found most congenial, song and "fantasy". In October 1840, a month after his marriage, he began work on a symphony in C minor, abandoned and never published; work on the "Spring" Symphony began in January, and by the end of the year he had completed two symphonies and the Overture, Scherzo and Finale for orchestra. Next he turned to chamber music, beginning with a study of Mozart and Haydn quartets. He wrote the three Opus 41 quartets in six weeks during the summer, composed the greatest of the chamber works, the Quintet for Piano and Strings, in two weeks during the following October, then plunged immediately into the composition of the Piano Quartet, finishing it a month later. But he paid heavily for such intensive creative activity, his exhaustion verging often on complete collapse.

On his thirty-ninth birthday he summed up his life: "Die gute Kl[ara] u. m. [eine] Melancholie". Work was the great resource, and Clara an unfailing source of strength - but the

diaries make it clear that married life was a sustained struggle both for Robert and Clara against his chronic depression, which transformed a youth of charm and high spirits, cheerfully assuming the character of the dreamy Eusebius or the passionate Florestan, girded for battle against the Philistines, into the sad, portly gentleman who sat in the café at a little table apart from his fellows, abstracted and remote, his mouth pursed as if he was whistling. The signs were present less than six months after his marriage: a bout of illness followed by depression, exhaustion, irritability with Clara, inability to work, a longing for drink, a perpetual morbid tension. (February 22, 1841: "Ueberhaupt eine ewige krankhafte Spannung in mir".) In March 1846, a week of unusually severe illness includes the ominous symptom of tinnitus ("merkwürdige Verstimmung des Gehörorgans"), which along with severe headache, muscular spasms and general debility marked the onset of tertiary syphilis, attacking his nervous system and culminating eight years later in general paralysis of the insane.

Most moving is the instinctive retrenchment that accompanied his sense of failing powers in the troubled Düsseldorf years, when he put his works in order, gathering together his critical writings, arranging piano reductions of the symphonies, writing piano accompaniments to Bach's works for solo violin and cello, compiling a "Dichtergarten" of allusions to music in the works of Shakespeare, Goethe, Jean Paul and Greek and Latin classics. There were original compositions too, but these, like the Violin Concerto which Clara and Joachim de-

cided to leave unpublished, are gestures without substance, the last flickerings of a mind which is half destroyed, functioning on habit and memory.

Work on the "Dichtergarten" continued almost until the end. Even after the onset of severe auditory hallucinations, expenses were carefully noted: one Thaler for postage, Grosschen for mineral water, 14 Groschen for the copyist (the last entry). There are notes on the course of his final illness: Feb. 11. Traurige Nacht (Gehör u. Kopf). Feb. 12. Noch schlimmer, aber auch wunderbar; Feb. 13. Wunderbare Leiden; Feb. 14. Leidenszeit. - Dr. Hasenklee. Feb. 16. Nicht besser. The one bright spot in the last months before his collapse was the appearance of the twenty-year-old Brahms. ("Sept. 30, 1853. In Brahms al[us] Hamburg; Oct. 1st. Brahmsen Besuch [ein Genius].") In March, when Schumann was removed to the asylum at Endenau, where he was to die two years later, Brahms moved in with Clara to support her in her time of suffering. The entries for the last two years in the *Haushaltbücher* are in Brahms' handwriting and Clara's.

It is to be hoped that this admirable edition will be made available in English. When the missing Volume Two is published, the selected diaries should constitute an invaluable resource for students, and a corrective to the misguided attempts of family and early biographers to conceal the true dimensions of Schumann's tragedy. For he must have lived, for years with the fear that the terrible fate portrayed so movingly in *Manfred* and *Scenes from Faust* was his own.

In the elevated manner

Stephen Daw

MALCOLM BOYD
Bach
290pp. Dent. £10.50.
0 460 04464

Malcolm Boyd's *Bach* replaces the earlier *Master Musicians* volume by Eva Mary and Sydney Grew (1947). That earlier book still reads as a labour of love; it conveys both the deep respect for Bach as a composer of Christian witness and the reassuring impression of a modest and bourgeois existence that may now be seen to be typical of the first half of the twentieth century. In discussing the music, Grew and Boyd have used rather flowery prose, but their observations were sometimes revealing: of the six-part *Ricercar* from the *Musical Offering*, they wrote, "it is living music, pure and tender of spirit, easy and natural of style, so that it sings a perpetual song, and of an emotion transcendently serene". However, Dr Boyd has the advantage over them of a whole new apparatus of post-war Bach scholarship at his elbow - and this gives him the opportunity to write with far greater authority regarding the development of Bach's style (or styles) chronologically: the situation of his music within a more familiar musical-historical context, and even the "justification", of the lack of it, for drawing conclusions regarding Bach's character, his approach to his work and his composition techniques. A great deal has happened in thirty years, and one of Boyd's most important achievements is that he has absorbed so much international scholarship without losing a sense of proportion and of the value of it all.

One area of Bach's music which has recently become the subject of dispute is the structure of the whole of the *Musical Offering* and its significance; after giving a neat summary of the evidence (in the original edition and other contemporary evidence), Boyd presents conflicting views regarding the arrangement and the significance of the work from Spitta, Dörfel, Hans T. David, Christoph Wolff and Ursula Kirkendale and concludes, wisely, "Theories, like men, should not hang on circumstantial evidence alone". He then reminds his readers of the value of re-approaching the music from the viewpoint which a practising musician might have held upon purchasing the work in the late 1740s, and makes a number of significant points which had passed, as it were, un-

noticed in the heated debates (or should it be oratory?) of the last five years.

This particular treatment is characteristic. The emphasis throughout is placed firmly on the music, with biographical and historical information cast in what might aptly be described as a positive supporting role. Facts are clearly and tidily presented, and are studied in appropriate contexts; the music itself may be viewed against its local traditional background (much of the organ music gains from this kind of examination), or it may be treated to an analysis that is altogether more abstract and descriptive (the positive accounts of the concertos stand out in this category, with excellent musical quotations); whether the study is brief or extended, it is frequently the richer in that these two approaches have been combined, resulting in conclusions that cannot fail to stimulate and to delight the newcomer and the connoisseur alike.

It becomes clear from an early stage that Boyd respects Bach very much; reading between the lines, we may gradually conclude that he loves the music too. However, the treatment is so very absorbing that it is only some way through the book that one begins to notice how little of his own character the author has conveyed in his study. There have certainly been many books which have, while describing and discussing music, become too personal and even cloyingly autobiographical, and Bach has not escaped this kind of treatment, even in recent years; but when one has learnt to respect one's commentator, one feels entitled to expect a little more wariness, or maybe enthusiasm from him.

Because of this slight coolness (which might well be a result of compression, for not a sentence seems to be wasted), when Boyd does express opinions, these come as something of a shock. He is quite entitled to prefer the *St Matthew Passion* to both the *St John Passion* and (perhaps more unusually) the *B Minor Mass*; but by no means all Bach lovers will unhesitatingly agree that it is "Bach's supreme achievement in church music". The cantatas in general are seen as being far less relevant to the present than other kinds of music on the grounds that "Bach can have had few expectations that the cantatas would long outlive him, and not everyone is a masterpiece". The first part of this sentence might equally well be applied to the *St Matthew Passion* (even) or the Brandenburg Concertos; the second has been contradicted almost word-for-word by Stravinsky, and I have arrived at an opinion

gained after some twenty years of study of the area of Bach's music - that weak performance may be common, but weak cantatas are nonexistent.

In a study of this length, a great deal must have to be omitted, and it is remarkable how much is covered so very well, making this one of the best-organized Master Musicians volumes to date. It is surprising that Boyd does not mention Bach's sensitivity to textual differences between the *Passions* accounts of St John and St Matthew, and does give much in the way of description of the performance-circumstances of much of the music: for example, Leipzig's two main churches are by English standards quite high and unusually short - a common feature of German town churches in general; we have records of their furnishings and galleries in Bach's day (including some good pictures of the *Waldkirche*). However, these are quibbles about the impressively thorough treatment that the music is given here.

One excellent feature of the *Master Musicians* series - especially in its new, larger format - has always been the practical nature of the indexes and appendices. Here, Boyd has provided us with a very clear dated list of works (although there are not very many clearly authoritative dates except for the vocal music); a useful calendar, a tidy personal and a practical and up-to-date select bibliography. Just before these is a short "note on nomenclature", useful not least because of its caution about these ideas having been pursued with "more vigour than discretion... sometimes to the point of absurdity". The illustrations are good, and the colour in the reproduction of the Hausmann portrait of Bach on the dust-jacket is accurate.

Good books on great creative artists are very often of this kind or length. It is very hard to do justice to great achievements in a short space without implying much and discussing little or trying to be too thorough, and, if result, losing any sense of argument or structural balance. One could hardly pay Dr Boyd a higher compliment than to report that this outstanding short study is completely worthy of an elevated subject. It has style, proportion and humility, and it is also like the music of Bach in that the initial impression that it gives of its authority remains when one returns to it. It is probably the best, and without much doubt the most constructive and fascinating book of this length on J. S. Bach that has yet been published in any language.

Yours irrepressibly

J. I. M. Stewart

HENRY JAMES
Letters: Volume Four, 1895-1916
Edited by Leon Edel
835pp. Belknap Press of Harvard University
Press, £25.50.
0674 38783 X

There is much "twaddle of graciousness" in this final volume of selections from Henry James's letters. "The best letters", he tells Charles Eliot Norton, "seem to me the most delightful of all written things - and those that are not the best the most negligible." If he felt he had received a good letter, he overwhelmingly said so. "Your beautiful letter", he writes to the self-assured and hedonistic Morton Fullerton, "deeply delights and moves me - being the most beautiful, I really think, I ever received from any man - pervaded as it is by an exquisite intelligence (ineffable luxury) as well as by the penetrating cord of affection." A letter from Grace Norton "is embalmed in a fragrance as of faint rose leaves in a faint blue jar... I can't tell you the comfort and charm it is to be talking with you even by this horrid machinery." The "horrid machinery" is the Remington typewriter being thumped by an amanuensis; there must be a score of places reproduced here in which James makes a to-do over the barbarous character of the instrument.

Such fussing is part of the general excess of feeling - deliberately that, and intended not quite to be believed in - which is constantly in evidence. Edmund Gosse asks him to write 3,000 words about Tolstoy; in declining the invitation James declares that it embarrasses and complicates his soul. He is sent a novel by an authoress who apparently believes it to be in his own manner; he "grovels in the dust" over his delayed acknowledgment of her "generous bounty". Odd valedictory locutions contribute to this effect of what he himself calls his "too much manner and style". "I beg you to feel yourself clung to for ever by yours irrepressibly, Henry James" is an example. Even his brother William gets, "With much actuality of emotion, ever your Henry".

Allied to this is a minor oddity: the insistent mock-supercilious use of the word "little". "The good little Thomas Hardy" is famous, but we are not expected to react to it as we do to "good old little Mrs Davies" (who was apparently an unassuming neighbour at Rye).

"The great little Alfred Austin" is a special case: "great" can only be a sarcasm, but Austin was literally "little" in the sense that one was unaware of his presence in a room until he emerged from behind a table. Kipling is "an embodied little talent"; he is "poor great little Rudyard" for whom James "prays tenderly"; at the same time he is accorded, in a letter addressed to him, unstinted and almost extravagant praise for *Kim*. All this is undeniably mannered, and much of it irritatingly whimsical. But as we might expect, James becomes wholly serious - although he remains syntactically elaborate - when he finds himself in a condition of deep emotional involvement with a correspondent.

This brings us to Hendrik Andersen and Jocelyn Persse. Leon Edel is convinced that here are two instances of what he calls homoerotic attachment. It is with Andersen that he is on the stronger ground. In a long series of letters to this indifferent young sculptor (whose treatment of James may be succinctly characterized as self-interested and shoddy) there flows a percurrent imagery of clasping and hugging that does powerfully suggest physical obsession of a homosexual sort. Persse was a different type in a different situation. He had no designs on James as likely to promote a career, and he contrived to be, or seem, only slightly and cheerfully puzzled as to why the distinguished old gentleman liked him so much and took the trouble to write the warmly affectionate letters he did.

James more than once confesses to a correspondent what is now sufficiently obvious from the whole record: that with all his sociabilities and appearances of intimacy he remained a very lonely man. To Grace Norton again (to whom he revealed himself with rather less difficulty than to others) he wrote from Rye in 1902. "I thought long ago that I knew how to live alone, but I am learning better with each revolving month", and to Persse in the following year he wrote similarly of his "empty and lonely halls". And here, I feel, Professor Edel takes too narrow a view of human need. It is surely extravagant to assert, as he does in his introduction, that James's "stories are filled with an intense wish to know what goes on in adult bedrooms". And it is unliking to neglect the fact that a lonely bachelor may long for a son quite as much as for a bedfellow.

What some readers may chiefly seek in the letters is any light on James's own work not already extracted from them by Edel in his

magistral and voluminous biography - and more particularly on those stories or novels which have occasioned the greatest diversity of interpretation and critical appraisal. So what, say, of *The Turn of the Screw*? Edel's own mind is made up about it: from the first page of his introduction we learn that it is "a drama of two children entrusted to a paranoid governess". James has a good deal to say about the story. It is "a very mechanical matter... an inferior, a merely pictorial, subject and rather a shameless pot-boiler." "The young woman, the spooks, the style, the everything", can scarcely, he seems to judge, be too vigorously condemned. It is a "wanton little tale"; "odious and hideous" and "foully ugly".

There is much "twaddle of graciousness" in this final volume of selections from Henry James's letters. "The best letters", he tells Charles Eliot Norton, "seem to me the most delightful of all written things - and those that are not the best the most negligible." If he felt he had received a good letter, he overwhelmingly said so. "Your beautiful letter", he writes to the self-assured and hedonistic Morton Fullerton, "deeply delights and moves me - being the most beautiful, I really think, I ever received from any man - pervaded as it is by an exquisite intelligence (ineffable luxury) as well as by the penetrating cord of affection." A letter from Grace Norton "is embalmed in a fragrance as of faint rose leaves in a faint blue jar... I can't tell you the comfort and charm it is to be talking with you even by this horrid machinery." The "horrid machinery" is the Remington typewriter being thumped by an amanuensis; there must be a score of places reproduced here in which James makes a to-do over the barbarous character of the instrument.

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Whether in all this lavish abjection there lies a disturbed sense of something lurking beneath what he calls in one place his "conscious intention", I find it very difficult to decide.

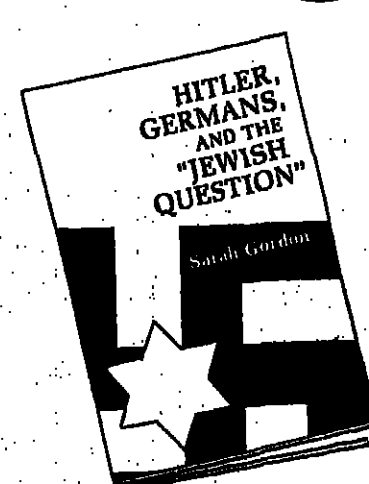
A somewhat similar situation confronts us if we hunt around for fresh light on *The Sacred Fount*, eminently a work - James tells his agent, James P. Pinker - "calculated to minister to curiosity". Mrs Humphry Ward seems to have been perplexed by it, and James, having assured her that it "isn't worth discussing", in fact discusses it in some detail. He calls it "a

mere tormenting trifle" that he erred in drawing out to novel-length. His "hand-to-mouth economy" was responsible, condemning him "to put it through in order not to have wasted the time already spent". "That *jeu d'esprit*", he tells Fullerton, "was a mere *trade accident*", conceived as a short story and then lucklessly elaborated. (He feels the same, he owns to William Dean Howells, about *The Spoils of Poynton* and *What Maisie Knew*.)

On the mature masterpieces there is not a great deal, and James's authentic estimate of what he has achieved is frequently invisible behind a screen of obdurate self-deprecation. He tells Edith Wharton that he is about to publish "a thing called *The Wings of the Dove*"; Howells learns that it is "prettyish", "a 'love-story' of a romantic tinge and touching and conciliatory tone"; Mrs Humphry Ward gets a detailed discussion to the same effect: "the subject is a poor one... the result of a base wish to do an amiable, a generally-pleasing love-story"; yet another authoress, Mrs Cadwalader Jones, receives some remarks (which have a familiar ring) lamenting that "the centre... isn't in the middle, or the middle, rather, isn't in the centre". *The Golden Bowl* is described to Mrs Wharton as "the most arduous and thankless task I ever set myself"; and Mrs Ward is judged "heroic" in having managed to "plough through" the novel - "which nothing could have induced me to do if I hadn't been its author". Only William James, whose unfavourable impression of the book appears to have been tactlessly and crassly expressed, rouses his brother to spirited expostulation, Henry declaring that he would sooner descend to a dishonoured grave than have written the kind of stuff William has a fancy for.

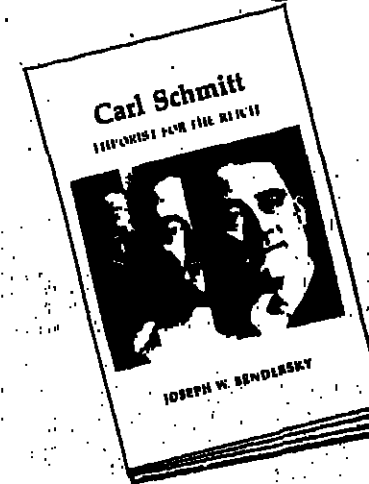
The Ambassadors, alone, is virtually untouched by any note of disparagement. Violet Hunt, indeed, is thanked for a "graceful remark about the poor dear old Ambassadors", and Persse is asked "to try to like the poor old hero". But to Howells the novel is described as "lovely - human, dramatic, international, exquisitely 'pure', exquisitely everything", and upon the Duchess of Sutherland James enjoins, in a manner altogether unusual with him, a slow, attentive and concentrated reading. Professor Edel has declared *The Golden Bowl* to be the crowning work of Henry James's career. But of the major late novels *The Ambassadors* is perhaps the most accessible, and James himself may in his heart have liked it the best because of that.

German Studies



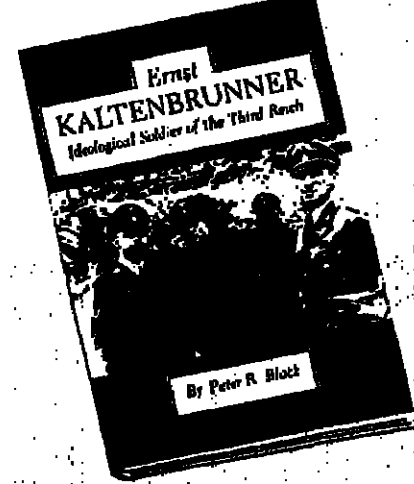
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15A Spence Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3JT

Urban vistas

Alec Clifton-Taylor

DAVID W. LLOYD
The Making of English Towns: A vista of 2000 years
 290pp. Gollancz. £12.95.
 0575 033371

English towns originated in many different ways. The earliest, founded by the Romans, all started as garrison towns, although when the Roman occupation became more secure some of them evolved into larger and much more civilized centres. The Saxon *burhs*, instituted by Alfred to repel the Danish invaders, were also military in origin, as were those of the Danelaw; some of both sets occupied Roman sites. Other towns came into being in the first instance to provide for the needs of a great abbey, like Bury St Edmunds, or to serve a Norman castle, like Ludlow or the Yorkshire Richmond. Some, like Norwich, provided for both. But the large majority of our towns owe their existence to trade and industry. Markets have always been of prime importance for the sale of local produce, and when the means of transport were primitive this was never carried further than necessary. Among the towns which achieved international celebrity and even lured merchants from the Continent, Bury St Edmunds might well have been included with the four here cited. Wool and the cloth trade accounted for many more towns, to be followed by the growth of innumerable other industries: glass-making, salt production, coal-mining, iron and steel goods, and finally manufacturing processes of every conceivable kind, almost all concentrated in towns.

In this most interesting book, which also covers Wales, David W. Lloyd has provided a very well-rounded account. He is especially good on the social and economic side, which figures prominently throughout, and a recurring strength of the book is the relating of architectural to social changes. But many other facets of this big subject are also considered. Feudalism and the manorial system are clearly explained, as they affected towns, and so is the whole subject of burgage tenure, a special form of land holding confined to towns under which, to encourage urban activities, tenants were freed from feudal obligations. To this day some old towns, like Ludlow, abound in long narrow plots of land, intended originally to accommodate workshops and (a point not mentioned here) sometimes also kitchens, which, in order to reduce (with so much wood and thatch used in the construction) the ever-present risk of fire, were best erected a little apart from the main house. Today these long plots are often gardens, with perhaps a garage at the far end; and a very pleasant surprise they can be, since the frontage betrays no hint of their existence.

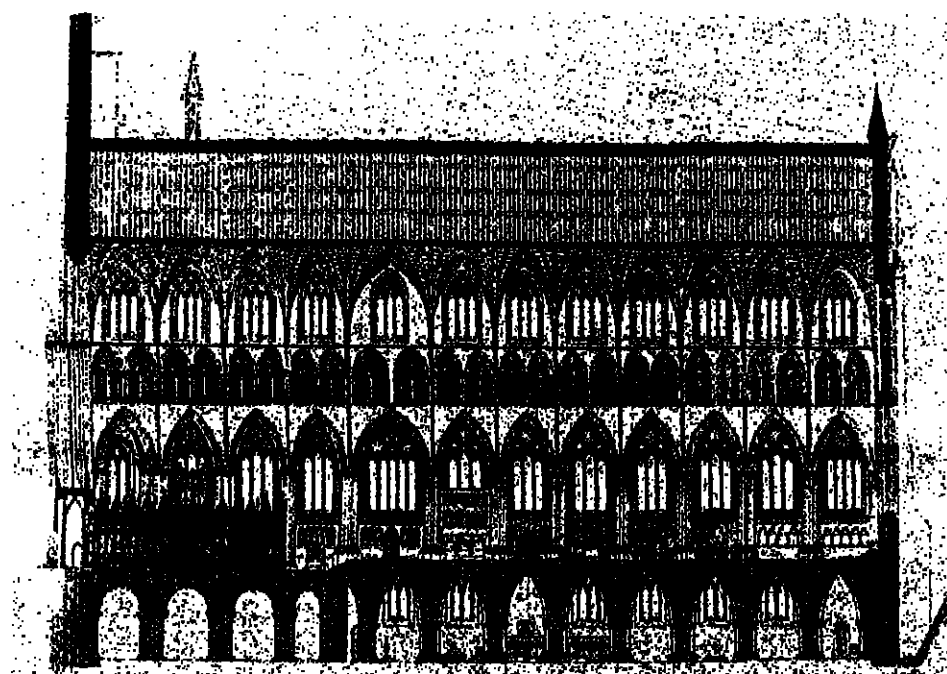
There are also, throughout the book, frequent references to building materials: a vital factor, certainly, in the appearance of towns. There are a few mistakes here: Stamford's limestone is not dark brown; Ashbourne's local stone is sandstone; Kentish ragstone, although not without sandy patches, is a crinaceous limestone, not a sandstone; there is no marble near Aberdeen, and presumably polished granite is what is meant; bricks in the Vale of York are more often dark brownish than light yellowish red. But usually the introduction of building materials is a nice bonus, and very much to the point.

Special chapters or sections are devoted, *inter alia*, to town walls and gates, market places, ports, shire, town and market halls, the history of the public parks, seaside resorts, Victorian piers, the creation of commuters' suburbs (Sutton was the first) after the advent of the railways, and finally the "model" towns and garden cities. The long chapter on Victorian cities and towns is specially well done. The aesthetic judgments are nearly always reliable, although there is room for two views about that "Victorian fairy palace under the intensely brilliant architect William Burgess", which is Lloyd's estimate of Cardiff Castle. I share his distaste for grid plans and his view that curvilinear in town planning, "a particularly British characteristic", is always to be preferred.

The book is very well illustrated; the 155 photographs, almost all specially taken by Peter Crawley, are admirably integrated with the text. There are also a very full index and

bibliography, a map of England and Wales marking most of the towns mentioned, and twenty-five old maps and plans, a great enrichment to the book. The plan of Leitchworth dates from 1925; none of the others is later than 1891.

Lloyd refers several times to bay windows being "flat-fronted and diagonal sided"; an oddly cumbersome way of saying canted, or splayed. I fancy that he would be hard put to it to name "hundreds of ports" in medieval and Tudor England. Chawton, Jane Austen's village, is not "fifteen miles or so" from Gosport but, to be exact, twenty-nine. Clifton Suspension Bridge was not "finished in the 1850s"; building was not resumed until 1861 nor completed until three years later, so Brunel, sadly, never saw it. The Circus at Bath was originally named the King's Circus, never the Royal Circus, as it is several times called here. Tewkesbury is not "set in the angle between the converging rivers Avon and Severn"; the builders knew better than to site it there, where it would have been exposed to intermittent flooding. But these (and there are others) are no more than gnats-bites on a thoroughly strong and healthy body. David Lloyd has written one of the best books on English towns that I have read, and without exception the most comprehensive.



A reconstructed section through the choir and crypts of old St Paul's by Edmund Ferrey, reproduced from *The Building of London from the Conquest to the Great Fire* by John Schofield (190pp. Colomnade Books/British Museum Publications. £12.95, 07141 8053 X).

Peasant style

Julian Munby

BARRY HARRISON and BARBARA HUTTON
Vernacular Houses in North Yorkshire and Cleveland
 254pp. Edinburgh: John Donald. £25.
 085976091 X

The study of traditional forms of building has developed quickly in the last few decades, encouraged by the need to record the rapid loss of so many buildings. It is a fascinating growth area where dedicated enthusiasts, as fiercely independent fieldworkers or organized in group projects, have marked out a field of academic study in a bold empirical enterprise guided more by the exchange of views in their own Vernacular Architecture Group than by the external imposition of guidelines and requirements. A large number of published studies have examined particular aspects in great detail, producing a bewildering picture of regional differences and a descriptive vocabulary that is baffling to all but the initiated. Fortunately, general surveys have appeared before the subject became too complex to allow generalizations, and form the basis on which regional studies can proceed.

The work of the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Vernacular Buildings Study Group over a decade has resulted in descriptions of nearly 800 buildings, which have been made into an exemplary regional study, correlating archaeological, architectural and historical evi-

Monastic clubland

John H. Harvey

COLIN PLATT
The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England
 270pp. Secker and Warburg. £15.95
 (paperback, £9.95).
 0436 375575

The literature of monasticism in Western Christendom is enormous, and of it a large proportion has been written upon English monks and their houses. Besides the strictly historical importance of the phenomenon there are the tragedy of its end and the romantic as well as aesthetic attraction of its architectural remains. For the archaeologist the ruins have the special interest of forming a sealed deposit. The terminus of 1536-40 is superadded to a wealth of documentary sources, and our century has developed two new methods of research: controlled excavation and aerial photography. Within some fifty years the mass of fresh information, fragmentary in type and often obscurely published, has been daunting, and it was time for a thorough synthesis.

This is provided in Colin Platt's *The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England*, which follows the pattern of several of his earlier explorations of the Middle Ages. Out of a multi-

licity of facts derived from modern scholarship he has built a readable account of two houses of monks and nuns. Its declared aim is a middle way - the social context - between the study of monasticism on the one hand and of its buildings on the other. As a factual statement, unbiased and clearly presented, the book could hardly be bettered. The numerous illustrations include typical plans (though no maps) and many photographs; in spite of the hackneyed subject, many plates are unfamiliar, and evidence great pains in selection. The standard of reproduction is above average and is a credit to BAS Printers.

So far so good, but Professor Platt has done much more than tell a plain and unvarnished tale. No questions are asked, nor answers given, yet there is a pattern in what is left unsaid. Just as the outer view of a Gothic traceried window, an exercise in crystalline geometry, is matched by the internal form of its translucent glass, so there is a complementary world corresponding to the factual story of the English monastic houses. The changing episodes of religious fashion through some fifteen generations throw off a series of harmonies.

Fashion is set from above, and it is explicit from Platt's narrative that the form taken by post-Conquest monasticism was dictated by King William's founding of Battle Abbey. Not merely a war memorial, nor an acquaintance to clear him of personal guilt, the great foundation near Hastings was to be a guarantee of the spiritual welfare of his dynasty. In like manner his companions and followers founded houses, each according to his means, to be family insurance policies. The patronage, once set up, continued as a perpetual inheritance. In principle, then, all the new Norman foundations were to serve the same purpose, and represented what their founders could afford. Few could set up a major Benedictine abbey, endowed for perhaps a hundred choir monks, but many lesser nobles could build a small priory or, later, a house of a dozen Augustinian regular canons, able also to carry out parochial duties. Differentiation into various orders catered not only for the variety of men's religious beliefs but for the depths of their pockets. The fact has to be faced that, however sincere and however saintly were the motives of the religious, the services which any given house performed for its founders were governed by a cash tariff.

For the social historian, however, the purely religious function is pushed into second place by the manifold practical aspects of the work of the Orders. A substantial part of the discipline of each, expressed in its Rule, consisted in the carrying out of material worldly functions. The Benedictines, and their reformed offshoots such as the Cistercians, were largely settled in towns and cities, and practised hospitality. Their guest-houses were among the best hotels of the time and, even if in theory free, normally operated at a profit. The stricter orders, led by the Cistercians, shunned the haunts of men but cultivated the land on a grand scale: agriculture, forestry, wool production, were brought by them to a high pitch measured in terms of revenue. The exalted élite of the Carthusians, revolting against the gregarious hugger-mugger of the older orders, were distinguished as serious writers, and became adept gardeners, each of his own walled plot.

Decline was due to many factors: notably, as Platt points out, to natural climatic deterioration from about 1250. Personal religious, directed to the individual rather than the family, came in with the friars soon after 1200 and, in the person of the Spanish St Dominic, doubtless represented the Christian answer to the challenge of Islam. Accompanied by official endorsement of the doctrine of Purgatory in 1274, this led to the multiplication of chantries and soul-masses. Support for the abbey became relatively less and less an attractive investment. More and more the Orders were seen as gigantic monopolies, greedy for land and providing for their inmates the luxury of exclusive clubs. In spite of much real good work, as well as sound religion, characteristic of many houses, the system became generally identified with that aspect of the Church which most needed reform. Yet, contrasting with the drastic methods adopted elsewhere, Henry VIII's final anti-trust legislation - horrifying as it was - has to be seen as a heroic expedient

Tracking down the atom

Jorge Calado

DAVID WILSON
Rutherford: Simple Genius
 639pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £14.95.
 0340 238054

When St Thomas Aquinas argued that two angels could not be found in the same cloud at the same time he was expounding the very impenetrability of matter which modern physics knows as Pauli's exclusion principle. From an early age Rutherford seems to have developed an obsession with ways of traversing solid matter, and this eventually led him to the unravelling of the structure of the atom and the amazing discovery that matter is mostly empty space. His first piece of published research, "Magnetisation of iron by high-frequency discharges" (1894), done in his native New Zealand when he was barely past his BA, placed him at the forefront of electromagnetic investigation. A year later he arrived at the Cavendish as the first research student ever in Cambridge, armed with his own radio-wave detector, and soon could claim the record for distance of transmission and reception of radio-waves. He was obviously impressed with the results, for in his first paper to the Royal Society ("A Magnetic Detector of Electrical Waves and some of its applications", 1896) he emphasizes five times (in less than half a page) the point that electromagnetic waves have the ability to pass through several thick walls, floors and other obstacles.

The discovery of X-rays at the end of the nineteenth century revitalized research in physics and Rutherford was quick to move into the new field. Under the guidance of his mentor, the redoubtable J. J. Thomson, the Cavendish Professor of Experimental Physics, he measured their ionizing power. Of course, X-rays were then a new, spectacular way of penetrating matter, be it wood, metal or human flesh, with the added bonus that they acted on a photographic plate; less than a year after their discovery Rutherford could excitedly send home rayograms of a frog, that eternal martyr of science. Research on X-rays led him to the identification of other types of radiation, this time corpuscular in nature, which he named alpha and beta - the essence of radioactivity - and would use as probes into the constitution of matter. By then he had moved to Montreal to be the Macdonald Professor of Physics at McGill, and there he enlisted the services of a brilliant young chemist, Soddy. In an age when physicists and chemists were often not on speaking terms, Soddy consciously made himself the first physical chemist. Together they tackled the problem of the thorium emanation and its ghost-like anomaly associated with open doors and currents of air in the laboratory. No wonder, for the emanation was a new element and, moreover, a radioactive gas. The open door which caused draughts also let in a revolution heralding a new age - the results unmistakably showed that one element could spontaneously change into another. Transmutation, the old dream of the alchemists, was taking place before the astonished eyes of the world. For this achievement Rutherford would receive, in 1908, the Nobel Prize for Chemistry, thus undergoing "an instantaneous transmutation" from physicist to chemist, as he ruefully observed.

With the move to Manchester in 1907, Rutherford began the "systematic attack" on the structure of the atom by using alpha-particles as unguided missiles. His imagination for setting up successful experiments was already legendary. Alpha-particles were fired through thin glass walls or metal sheets, prompting Soddy to remark later on that this is "the only known phenomenon for which the dictum that two particles of matter cannot occupy the same space at the same time is not true". Then in June 1909 the impossible happened, and a few alpha-particles were seen to bounce back from a thin sheet of gold foil. In Rutherford's famous words, "It was as though you had fired a fifteen-inch shell at a piece of tissue paper and it had bounced back and hit you". Anomalous in an otherwise orderly experiment were always seized on by Rutherford with the zest of a Sherlock Holmes. When every other possibility was eliminated, what remained, however unlikely, had to be the truth, and in this instance it meant that the atom was "the seat of an intense electric field", and that "it must contain a massive charged centre of very minute dimensions". By Christmas of 1910 he knew what a real atom must look like. Not the compact, "plum pudding" model of J. J. but a more graceful, almost Viennese concoction: a tiny, positively charged nucleus, surrounded by orbiting electrons in circular orbits. It was, in Eddington's words, "the greatest change in our idea of matter since the time of Democritus".

Alpha-particles, which Rutherford revealed to be helium nuclei, remained his plaything all his life. Minute chips (protons or hydrogen atoms) could be seen flying off nitrogen atoms when these were bombarded with alpha-particles. What remained, after the alpha-particle was swallowed and the proton released, was no longer nitrogen, but oxygen (artificial transmutation). The first evidence that the atom could be smashed was unknowingly obtained by Marsden in 1914, but it was left to Rutherford to understand the process and prove the case. At that time he was also involved in war work, sending off into the sea innumerable beams of sound and studying their reflection by submarines in the hope of devising a sure method of detection. But so engrossed was he by his epic experiments that he missed an important Allied meeting on anti-submarine warfare. He sent word that he had to complete work in which he thought he had succeeded in splitting the atomic nucleus - "If this were true, its ultimate importance is far greater than that of war". The First World War did not turn out to be the war that ended all wars, but the energies unleashed by Rutherford's experiments hold the world in a precarious balance and have, so far, been a deterrent to further wars.

The next stage was Cambridge, where in 1919 he succeeded Thomson in the Cavendish professorship. He had been "riding the crest of the wave of modern physics" (in A. S. Eve's often quoted expression) for twenty-five years, and went on riding it with major discoveries till the very end. After all, as Rutherford himself observed, he had "made the wave, at least to some extent".

The Cavendish became the greatest experimental physics laboratory, dazzling the world with a girandola of outstanding firsts. The zenith came in the *annus mirabilis* of 1932 ("the most spectacular" year in the history of science", according to C. P. Snow) which saw the discovery of the neutron (predicted in 1920 by Rutherford), artificial disintegration (in which Cockcroft and Walton used Gamow's tunnel effect to penetrate and thus destabilize the nucleus) and the confirmation of the existence of the positive electron (positron) which is a form of anti-matter. Rutherford went out with a big bang - in his last paper he announced the discovery of the "Isotopes of Hydrogen and Helium with mass 3", the former the material for nuclear fusion and the hydrogen bomb, the latter the playground of low-temperature physicists (where solids liquefy on cooling). In 1937, at the age of sixty-six, he died of intestinal paralysis caused by a strangulated hernia.

Rutherford once said that "if a piece of physics could not be explained to a barmaid it was not a very good piece of physics". By this account David Wilson has written an excellent book. He was fortunate to be able to draw on unpublished material which sheds new light on Rutherford's activities during the war and the "imbroglia" involving Kapitza, the Russian genius with a Dostoyevskian temperament ("after all we are only small particles of floating matter in a stream which we call Fate"), who was one of the luminaries at the Cavendish in 1921-34. There was drama but not scandal in Rutherford's circle. Since its nature and aim are to probe into the deep recesses of matter, nuclear physics seems to be a good ground for breeding spies. Rutherford's liberal attitudes attracted people from diverse backgrounds and this social levelling eased tensions among his collaborators and made treachery very unlikely. Loyalty to the man almost always meant loyalty to the country.

In its completeness, readability and objectivity, this biography supersedes Eve's authorized one (*Rutherford*, 1938); it is also much more detailed than other Norman Feather's discerning memoir (*Lord Rutherford*, 1940) or the more recent monograph by C. L. Bolz (*Ernest Rutherford*, 1970). Of course, this is not the kind of biography that tells you what Rutherford's favourite dish was. He seems to have kept every letter and notebook, but he only comes to life when dealing with science. The man was his work, and the work made

him, along with Faraday, one of the two greatest experimental scientists of all time. "I am sorry for the poor fellows that haven't got labs to work in", he once wrote. He had an unfailing talent for devising the simplest ways of proving experimentally what he intuitively suspected, from previous experiments, to be the truth. He therefore belonged in the tradition which considers an experiment useful if it leads to another worthwhile experiment. In his own words, "Experiment, directed by the disciplined imagination either of an individual or, still better, of a group of individuals of varied mental outlook, is able to achieve results which transcend the imagination alone of the greatest philosopher." Or again, "I have always been a strong believer in attacking scientific problems in the simplest possible way, for I think that a large amount of time is wasted in building up complicated apparatus when a little forethought might have saved much time and expense." His lesson seems to have been partly forgotten in our own age, when big science is mainly about big funding and big funding seldom takes risks.

Although Rutherford once said that it was "extremely difficult to keep up [mathematics] when all your energies are absorbed in experimentation", it is not true that he lacked a sound theoretical background. His fruitful collaboration with Bohr attests to this, and he was also one of the first scientists to use Planck's quantum theory. His attitude to Einstein's special theory of relativity was more ambiguous. To Wien's assertion that "no Anglo-Saxon can understand relativity", Rutherford replied "No! They have too much sense." He was afraid that "it might tend to draw scientific men away from experiments towards broad metaphysical conceptions", and argued that it aroused such interest in the general public precisely because no one could offer an intelligent explanation to the average man. But once it had been experimentally confirmed (by Eddington, in 1919) he accepted it and termed it "a magnificent work of art". His genius, however, lay

elsewhere, for instance in his feeling for the order of magnitude of whatever he was measuring or looking for. According to his pupil Lord Bowden, Rutherford was the only person in his experience who "could copy a dozen numbers down wrongly, add them up wrongly, and then come up with the right answer".

On receiving an honorary degree at Göttingen in 1932, Rutherford stated that he was "a simple man"; yet his contemporaries, while agreeing on his boisterous sense of fun and magnetic personality, his kindness and generosity, have contrasting views of him. It is true that "he hated pomposity and artificiality" (Tizard), but he was also "superbly and magnificently vain as well as wise" (Snow). For Langevin he was "a force of nature", whereas for Chadwick he was "not brilliant, not even a clever man".

Rutherford was the product of a Victorian drive for advancement and progress, with its inherent belief in the redeeming power of science. He was a man of sense, rather than sensibility. He moved at ease and was fitted in the worlds of culture and politics, perhaps because he abhorred public controversy and preferred to win arguments in private. His gregariousness, however, stopped short of physical contact, and he often betrayed an exceptional sexual diffidence. He read voraciously, but mainly cheap thrillers and shabby shockers (after reading Snow's *The Search* he promptly informed the author that he had not liked "the erotic bits"). He had the enthusiasms of a child. Moved by a military tattoo, he said "that expressed the true spirit of England far better than the nonsense you read in the *New Statesman*".

Samuel Alexander, professor of philosophy at Manchester during Rutherford's time there, once remarked that two of the greatest men of his day were both boys - Einstein was a merry boy and Rutherford a rowdy one. The gods smiled upon them and gave them the universe as their box of toys.

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The misery after the muck

Valentine Cunningham

DAVID STOREY
Present Times
270pp. Cape. £8.95.
0224 021885

David Storey usually writes as if he came from the fictional charm school that promotes soft-centered versions of 1950s provincial realism. He writes well, as they say, commanding people's talk superbly, cutting between his scenes with an enviable smoothness, staging in his novels terrific set-pieces that keep reminding you that he's also a dramatist who can really do a terrific set-piece on stage. He's commonly a most biddable author. The tones of northern grittiness that he produces tend to be acceptably house-trained for southern readers. His heavy males have pitiable aspects, puppy touches, their proneness to manipulative self-pity leaning towards the forgivable. Storey's grimmest tales affect agreeable silver linings. And almost inevitably, *Present Times* comes loaded with Storey's usual technical attractions and magnetisms. On the human side, though, the charm has in many senses worn quite off.

Frank Attercliffe is a one-time northern professional footballer who might come out of David Storey's earliest fictions but who has in the meantime made good, pushed himself up in the world and is now a sporting journalist with five children, an executive-style house, and an unpublished play somewhere at the back of his drawer. He has, in other words, turned himself into a character fit for more recent Storey stories. And he's most unhappy with the way his world – and, since his world is put to us as a

microcosm of the world, with the way life in general – is going. So is the novel. What's new is the degree and scope of their shared dyspepsia.

Attercliffe lives for the sweaty all-boys-togetherness of the press-box and the boozier, and needs that hard-mouthed weekend fellowship of exclusive male interest-groups. There he finds the vivid weekly reminders and endorsements of the rough, protracted, but affirmatively manly struggle he went through to lever himself out of the mucky proletarian gutter. But suddenly, at the age of forty-seven, his settled male routines, consolations and prizes are hauled and kicked away. His newspaper sacks him. His oldest ally in the sports-writing trade dies of cancer. Worse, his teenage daughters start coming home with irksome feminist and other assorted libertarian chat, not to mention black and socialist boy-friends. More affronting still, the wife who pushed off a couple of years before with the sickly awful and very rich proprietor of a smart-car business decides to return, quite impenitent, stridently claiming her right to live off Attercliffe again and in the family house that he is still paying for. Naturally enough, Attercliffe feels hard done by and most sorry for himself. The two older daughters vociferously interpret their mother as an emblem and turn against their pained dad as a typical male oppressor. Their mother's female doctor supports them vigorously. Nobody seems to care about Attercliffe's redundancy, nor about his misery in the grotty flat he's forced out into. He keeps hearing the apparently derisive laughter of his antagonists from behind closed doors and other excluding screens. Events, and especially women, are making a monkey out of him.

It's a terrible plight for anyone, but especially for the male reader, to be plunged into. Storey piles up Attercliffe's burdens with sadistic intent and masochistic relish. Detering rhetorics pound away at Attercliffe's misery. The wife, the daughters, the doctor, an actress he does a profile of, all dish out the same feminist party-line about historic and continuing male advantage. The girls and their black chums go on and on about the evils of white colonialist history, police brutality, the necessity of crime to adjust the social imbalance. At the younger children's school, loony liberal teachers drive away about democracy in spelling and grammar. And all this rebarbative theory is backed in the most enthusiastic Marxist style by equally hurtful praxis. One of the wife's male chums slugs Attercliffe to the floor in a pub. The daughters fill up the house with pot-smoking black gangsters. One of the girls gets herself arrested and then shacks up with youthful criminals in an illegal squat. The younger brothers and sister turn up every weekend to put in some nifty practice as apprentice critics-of-father. They can't spell, either. Attercliffe has to abide in bed-sitter misery. In a set of technicoloured horror scenes his spouse smashes a window, throws fits, calls in the constabulary, insults potential house-purchasers, changes the locks, and paints slogans on the sitting-room walls.

None of which is very funny for Attercliffe, nor is it meant to be. In fact, Attercliffe's glooming is stoked into an extraordinary threnody of despair about and hatred against The Way Things Are Going for Middle-Aged White Men in Our Britain. Present times, as the novel joins Attercliffe in complaining, stink. Not that the novel goes the

whole way with all of the complaints swirling about in it. The unemployed autodidact Wilkins, who lives in the flat below Attercliffe and whose every conversation is a tirade against the unions ("Leadswingers United"), this "slob society", the idiots for whom the penny hasn't yet dropped, isn't finally backed by the novel. Nor is the outraged parent who slams his children's schoolteachers for reducing the white kiddies on whose behalf he fought the war to the lowly level of Britain's Blacks and Asians. But Attercliffe, angry spokesman for every bar-room monner about the crushing weight of his alimony payments, is wholly backed by Storey and his text. This grossly enraged fiction has been written precisely in order to go all the way with Attercliffe's long-freighted grievances. If only, the novel goes, if only Society, or God, or something, would stand up a bit more for male bastards.

Storey's touch is so heavy that the advocacy fails to work. Any residual sympathy it might arouse keeps leaking away from Attercliffe's case because of the dementedness of his presentation. The argument is obviously, and unfairly, loaded, the general nastiness too dogmatically fixed, the wife and daughters too contrived, the wooden in their horrid hostilities. Even the rustlings of alleviation in the end – squinting daughter smiles at Attercliffe, wife comes to see his new Storeyesque play about a footballer's changing-room, sun glints through rain, cutting across black townscapes – don't offer much winning-over of this reader. This esthetically sustained, strangely bitter, even rantant isn't going to be legitimized, or get his condoned, just by a handful of last-minute softening touches even of the kind Storey elsewhere so good at appealing us with.

Doom-toned bomb-talk

Galen Strawson

JAMES THACKARA
America's Children
330pp. Chatto and Windus. £8.95 (paperback, £3.95).
0701 27885

America's Children are exiles and immigrants, eccentric and adult Europeans – men like Enrico Fermi, Hans Bethe, Edward Teller, John von Neumann and George Kistiakovsky. They are the scientists who worked on the Atom Weapons Project at Los Alamos from 1943-5, under the charming and remarkable directorship of Dr Robert Oppenheimer. They invented the A-bomb, they built "Fat Boy" and "Thin Man" and changed the world. One of them, Edward Teller, went on to build the H-bomb. But it is Oppenheimer who is the real subject of James Thackara's book – it is his life from 1929, when he returned from Europe aged twenty-six to convalesce on the Los Alamos Mesa, to 1954, when he was secretly indicted to answer the charge of being a security risk. In between, his years of teaching and research at Berkeley, his rise during the war from being Director of "Rapid Rupture" to being Director of the whole Atom Weapons Project, and his post-war years as Chief advisor to the Atomic Energy Commission and Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton.

It is not hard to imagine how an attack on *America's Children* would go. It would talk about the desperately studied phrasemaking; about the force-fed representations of sensibility, the bolting hyperbole; about the dreaded compound words ("the scientists' strange-hollowed with concentration", the "flashing-breath" of the Hiroshima bomb) that are still best left to Aeschylus. It would find the book to be a linguistically deranged piece of unrelievedly vibrant biography that commandeers the life of a much respected man not twenty years dead in order to stage a misty-eyed, megaton melo-drama. It would quote with extremely damaging effect:

These criticisms would on the whole be just. Both the ethics and the aesthetics of this particular fictional tinkering with the recently real are questionable. Thackara sticks quite closely to the massively documented facts, but he weighs in with heavy invention as soon as the

biographies and FBI files give out. Then files tell us that Oppenheimer spent the night with his old girl-friend Jean Tatlock, a Communist, in 1943. But they do not tell us what passed between them, for the Tatlock defence was not bugged. And so Thackara makes "Oppy" think, speak and act the way he wants him to, here and elsewhere. Oppy must not have thanked him for this puppetry, and neither Thackara's good intentions nor Oppenheimer nor his intense stylized consciousness can save his incantatory "thrice purple book from its echoing delirium of taste, style and decorum."

Still, it has its points – some good phrases, some smart sentences. Thackara knows something about the internal oracles of agonizing self-examination. He makes some serious attempts to render the rapid mental decision, difficult decision and moral uncertainty. The way in which he fails to control his general rhetorical modes is interesting. First he falls from a fairly straightforward narrative mode (which is, admittedly, already more emotionally supercharged) into a Tom Wolfe New Journalism souped-up irony mode, then into slow beta-blocker biblical mode ("he passed . . . Yet Robert went among the cities . . . He bore tidings . . ."), then into simple and often well-handled dialogue, then into the predatory doom-toned mode of Bomb-talk, marked by much declamatory and other celebrated constipation sufferer, Franz Kafka, and of course Barbellion's adopted "mother", as he calls her, Marie Bashkirtseff.

Barbellion was born in Barnstaple, Devon, in 1889, and died in 1919, at the age of thirty. His real name was Bruce Cummings, he took his assumed name from the front of a confectioner's shop in Bond Street. The youngest of six children, he was puffy, under-sized and shy. Paralysis started to close in early in life, made the more terrifying by his father's death from a stroke and paralysis, followed, not long after, by his mother's partial paralysis and death.

Despite all handicaps, Barbellion taught himself entomology from textbooks and life, and managed to get himself a post at the British Museum (no more impenetrable to boredom and spleen than elsewhere, as it turned out). This journal, first published by Chatto a year

Flirting with the flames

John Weightman

FRANÇOISE SAGAN
Avec mon meilleur souvenir
215pp. Paris: Gallimard. 72fr.
207 0701255

Thirty-one years ago, Françoise Sagan rocketed to international fame, at the age of nineteen, with her "daring" first novel, *Bonjour Tristesse*, and ever since then she has orbited, rather like a literary Brigitte Bardot, in that publicity stratosphere that ordinary mortals gaze up to in wonder. Although she has maintained a steady output of deftly-written variations on the theme of one woman between two men or one man between several women, she has not quite proved to be the Mozart of the novel that François Mauriac predicted. Both her novels and her plays, it seems to me, belong less to literature proper than to day-dream romance, because their undoubted felicities of style and perception tend to be counterbalanced by the too frequent beauty and too winsome anguish of the invariably well-heeled characters.

However, the publicity has always suggested that, behind the rather anodine fiction, was a complicated, perhaps tempestuous person, leading what the French mysteriously call *une vie de bâtons de chaise*, that is, a riotous existence full of love affairs, broken marriages, changes of residence, night-life, drink, car-crashes and gambling. One could look forward, then, in due course, to an exciting biography or a juicy volume of memoirs. No biography has so far appeared but now, at the age of fifty, Mme Sagan herself lifts a corner of the veil, as she looks back with a degree of nostalgia on certain themes and episodes of her life. Incidentally, after previously passing through the hands of three publishers – Juliard, Flammarion and J.-J. Pauvert – she now appears for the first time under the Gallimard imprint. Does this imply that she is about to receive the accolade of a collected edition of her works in the classic Pléiade series? Stranger things have been known, and it would certainly be curious to see her in that particular niche, alongside her formidable colleague, Mme Yourcenar.

Meanwhile, this new volume is not the rich bundle of gossip revelations that might have been expected. Like the novels, it leaves out all the humdrum, down-to-earth details of reality that beautiful people can disregard, and do indeed often disregard on principle. Sagan is, in her way, a dandy, not of course in the sartorial sense but in the deeper meaning of someone who has chosen to live according to an individual code which excludes everything except certain refined and extreme sensations, or encounters with other exceptional individuals. She tells us next to nothing, then, about her family background, the precise details of her career, her marriages, her children, if any, or her views on life in general during the past thirty years. Five of the ten chapters are devoted to rapturous accounts of her meetings with celebrities – Billie Holiday, Tennessee Williams, Orson Welles, Rudolf Nureyev and Jean-Paul Sartre – and five are essays on particular themes running through her life: gambling, driving at speed, the rise and fall of Saint-Tropez as a home for rare spirits, her involvement with the theatre and her formative literary enthusiasms.

Although herself a star, Sagan is also a star-worshipper, and preferably of great, wounded *monstres sacrés*, whose preeminence is accompanied by some major, perhaps mortal, handicap. She builds up a touching picture of Billie Holiday, so far gone in drink and drugs as to be only faintly aware of her surroundings, or of Tennessee Williams and Carson McCullers, like a tenderly united brother and sister communing in pure gin, or of Orson Welles, a Gulliver of a genius tied down by lilliputian financial problems, or of the blind and aged Sartre, a revered Oedipus-figure being led gently out to lunch by Françoise in the role of dutiful daughter-in-law.

Her liking for each of them seems authentic enough, and she was obviously thrilled to live for a while in their aura – the "Lettre d'amour à Jean-Paul Sartre" even has a groupie-like ring – but her almost girlish fervour doesn't convey much about her reasons for admiring them. It is true that she enthuses about Billie Holiday's singing and Tennessee Williams's plays, but only in the most general and unenlightening terms; similarly, her comments on Sartre have little to do with his philosophy, literature or general character. Only the Nureyev chapter is cooler in tone. The dancer's sorrow is that he achieved fame and fortune at the cost of separation from his mother and sisters, and he

before Barbellion died, was put together from several diaries in a final and successful bid for fame.

The account of the early years, from the age of thirteen onwards, contains nature notes which it is permissible to skip. Cummings is not Kilver. We wait for the whip to crack. In fact, the last half of the book is far superior, as death draws nearer. Barbellion likes to reveal himself as a smart Alec rotter – as in the famous entry when he returns to his wife after a rest cure: "October 5. Home again with my darling . . . The baby is a monster." The whole dynamic of the book lies in making our compassion and disgust conjoin. We are right to be in love with his ruin, as he is.

The balance of decay and jollity is constantly sustained. For instance, "It is hard not to be somebody even in death" (1912), and in 1917: "I read about the War in a ha'penny paper". The encounter with Bashkirtseff is rightly dramatic. "We are identical! Oh Marie Bashkirtseff, how we should have hated one another! She feels as I feel. We have the same self-absorption, the same vanity and corroding ambition . . . Her journal is my journal. All mine is stale reading now."

I came upon Barbellion when I was the age he was when he wrote the above. I was living in Barnstaple, undergoing similar pangs of self-hate and self-love. It is something of a surprise to find that the book still has power. An appetite for life, coupled with a fear to lie in cold obstruction and to rot unknown, remains a potent mixture.

The precision of observation is good. Horror at the encroaching paralysis; Barbellion's discovery of how little he regarded his wife, the increasing difficulty of movement; all are pinned down in few words. "I re-enjoyed the

child's satisfaction in coaxing a button to slip into its hole; all grown-up people have forgotten how difficult and complex such operations are."

Present-day audiences will find a new irony in this book. Barbellion might never have died as he did, or as soon as he did, given a different diet. Details of his treatment are scanty, and seem to consist of doctors shaking their heads and saying, "Keep on with the arsenic and strychnine." There's an awful glimpse of a doctor's surgery with "all that furniture" and a photograph of Madame Blavatsky over the door. There are all the Gold Flakes. "Smoked six cigarettes and went to bed. Tomorrow Fifth Symphony of Beethoven." The suffering wife, Eleanor, who married Barbellion knowing he had only a year or two to live, kisses him and lights him another cigarette.

He just survived to see the First World War draw to a close. He tries to belittle his sufferings by pointing out to himself how many millions are suffering and dying while he is safe. Egotism wins, as win it should. His hopes about the future, though suitably epigrammatic, are as yet unfulfilled. "The next struggle, in some ways more bitter and more protracted than this, will be between capital and labour. After that, the millennium of Mr Wells and the Spiritistic Age. After the aeroplane, the soul."

Barbellion left out the intervening stage of The Bomb. But at least the kind Mr Wells wrote an introduction to his *Journal*, reprinted in this edition. Wells also set up a trust fund, aided by Bennett and Galsworthy. The fame Barbellion longed for showered its gold and column-inches in the nick of time. The readership he wrote for has been genial. Chatto has been diligent. Tormented journal-writers of today have less reason to trust in posterity.

The Thirties' round

Phyllis Willmott

JEAN MACGIBBON
I Meant to Marry Him: A personal memoir
182pp. Gollancz. £10.95.
0575 034122

The title is misleading. This is not a Mills and Boon romance that has by some error come out under the Gollancz imprint. It is, as its sub title more accurately proclaims, a memoir of childhood and early adulthood in the pre-war years. As Robert Kee acutely comments in his foreword, it is a somewhat strange memoir; fragmented, dislocated and yet also fascinating is how he describes it. (Kee, one presumes, is or was – a co-partner of the man the author meant to – and indeed did – marry, James MacGibbon of the publishing firm of MacGibbon and Kee.)

Jean MacGibbon (née Howard) was the elder of two daughters of a chartered accountant (junior partner in his father's firm) and of Margaret Murray, a talented pianist, accompanist and singer who, with some ambivalence, modified her professional aspirations as a musician to suit the demands of a bourgeois marriage at the end of the Edwardian period. The author's early life after the Great War centred on a house in the middle-class part of Hampstead Garden Suburb where her mother's Bechstein piano seemed the heart of the home and where a cook, a house-parlour-maid and a nursemaid helped the domestic wheels to turn more or less smoothly. For Jean MacGibbon, Golders Green was a "safe, sunny, open place bounded to the east by Wild Wood and Big Wood where in spring revels were held called 'Santafairyland'."

The evocative first chapter on Golders Green is followed by others about the times spent at the house of the paternal grandparents who lived in some splendour near Weybridge in a "large castellated, creeper-covered house in the foothills of St George's Hills". Subsequent chapters cover memories of school years at what seems to have been a remarkably liberating boarding-school and then at a dour and Spartan public school in the shadow of a ruined monastery in Scotland where the girls were issued with "house shoes, snow boots, belts of webbing and leather for games and calico knicker linings that cracked when we sat down".

Sometime during or soon after these school years, Jean MacGibbon began to write "in an aimless fashion, filling notebooks with random observations". It becomes clear in the second half of the book that she has drawn on these notebooks to plump out memories that, as so often happens, seem to lack the pristine brilliance of the memories the mind holds – unaided by notebooks – of early childhood. As social history these chapters have some value, but they are artlessly and carelessly written and deteriorate at some points, for example, into little more than brief references to writers and artists known or met in the course of the social round in the late 1920s and early 1930s. (This was a time when a young married couple such as the MacGibbons could take on a three-room flat near Hyde Park and have a living-in maid on an income of about £5 per week.) The account of this butterfly period does, however, serve as a good contrast to what comes after.

The MacGibbons (who had moved to Barnes after the birth of their son Hamish) were "shocked out of [their] inaction by the outbreak in 1936 of the Spanish Civil War". Soon after they became members of the Barnes Communist Party. The descriptions of their activities and of what drew such unlikely recruits to Communism at that time is laconic, sometimes amusing, but also illuminating because it explains the significant change in consciousness that this wrought in the MacGibbons and, no doubt, many others at that time. The book ends soon after the outbreak of war in 1939, with Jean MacGibbon recklessly ready (in view of her utter inexperience) to take on the job of cook-housekeeper in the country refuge to which her son's nursery school had been evacuated. Sadly, at the end of the war she suffered a severe mental breakdown which for many years stunted the development of her undoubted literary talent.

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Capturing the totality

W.G. Beasley

GEN ITASAKA (Editor-in-Chief)
Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan
Nine Volumes. Kodansha, distributed by
International Book Distributors.
£400 the set.
0870116207 (the set)

The compilers of the chronicle *Nihon Shoki* (c.720) attributed to a fifth-century Japanese emperor a decree whose text the Chinese chroniclers identified as belonging to one of their own Sui emperors. From one point of view this was historiographical dishonesty. It was also an early example of the use of Chinese encyclopedias in Japan, since they were almost certainly the source of the quotation. After the eighth century the making of Chinese-style encyclopedias, especially those which afforded information useful to rulers and officials, became part of Japanese practice too. It lasted for as long as knowledge about Chinese civilization seemed relevant, that is to say, until the interest of Japanese scholars began to turn instead towards the West, which was in the second half of the eighteenth century. Even then, the form in which they characteristically embodied what they learnt did not generally change. Modern Japan has produced a vast array of multi-volume compendia and thesauri: biographical and historical dictionaries; dictionaries of place-names; chronologies; collections of statutes; statistical works; surveys of knowledge of every kind, both general and specific.

Given this background, it is not surprising that a Japanese publisher, convinced that there is much "misunderstanding or lack of understanding" about Japan, should have chosen the encyclopedia format as a means of trying to set things right. Much of the material for such a book lay ready to hand in existing works in Japanese. Japan's economic importance seemed to guarantee that readers would be found to take notice of it. Thus, to quote Edwin Reischauer's introduction, there was launched an undertaking designed "to present the totality of a major world culture in a foreign language". It involved some 1,200 contributors, over 500 of them non-Japanese, working under the supervision of an international editorial committee. To put those figures into context, they mean that almost all the world's English-speaking academic specialists on Japan – the great majority being Americans – were brought into the enterprise.

Technically, the result is admirable. There are biographical notes on hundreds of famous men and women, past and present: emperors and empresses, soldiers, writers, artists, actors and actresses, politicians (though no baseball players, apparently). There is brief factual information about cities, shrines and temples, industries, companies, books, magazines and newspapers, notable events. Some of the latter, it might be thought, would rarely come to the attention of Western readers – for example, the grain embargo controversy (1889), the Morioka powdered milk incident (1955) – but at least they fairly reflect a national preoccupation with labelling things. Also useful and important are the short explanations of Japanese technical terms, such as might be encountered in the study of anything from cooking to religion or from flower arrangement to feudalism. The entries are accurate, succinct, up-to-date; the latest dates covered seem to be 1981-2. Where an entry is substantial, it is provided with a bibliography. Cross-references are numerous. The index volume gives Japanese written forms for names and terms, and provides nominal lists under such headings as prefectures (though not the pre-1871 provinces), painters (by school), military leaders (by service affiliation), corporations (by industry), philosophers, prime ministers, diplomats. Maps and illustrations, though small, are mostly very clear. In sum, this is a first-rate reference work.

Yet the implication of its introduction is that it is intended to be more than that. Discrete pieces of factual information, however well put together, are not enough to depict "the totality of a major world culture". There has to be something else: the characterization of a society and its achievements, which the world can be invited to consider. To find it we must turn to

the longer, more interpretative entries, which give the encyclopedia its shape.

Examining them, it becomes apparent that the book incorporates not one vision of Japan, but several, putting the reader in danger of the same kind of confusion as the blind men touching the elephant. First, there is what must still be regarded as the orthodox view of Japanese culture, as entrenched in the arts faculties of several hundred Japanese universities. It is history-based. The entry "History of Japan" runs to 48 pages; its cross-references lead the reader to as many more by way of articles on particular periods and topics. To this can be added the major articles on literature (35 pages), various aspects of art, religions (Buddhism and Shinto) and philosophy (chiefly Confucianism), which are all treated historically. Their central theme is that of Japanese assimilation of cultural influences from the Asian mainland, which have gradually been incorporated into a coherent pattern alongside some indigenous traditions (poetry, Shinto myth) and social institutions (the emperor system, the family). Japanese-ness is presented as the product of a prolonged eclecticism.

There is an extension of the argument into modern times, in the sense that Japan's relations with the Western world before 1945 can be treated as a continuation of the same process in a different context, at least in part. The real break comes when one turns to the consequences of modernization and to the nature of contemporary Japanese society. This involves a shift from history to social science, hence from particularist to universalist headings. Examination of the modern economy requires entries on capital formation, labour, problems of management, foreign trade. Sociology furnishes topics like bureaucracy, kinship, social stratification, education, crime. Law and politics, inevitably, have more headings that reflect Japanese circumstance, but both are treated comparatively (mostly with America). One result is that Japanese-ness becomes identified as a set of departures from the norms of modernity, rather than as a concept defined historically.

These two approaches have one thing in common: that both Japanese and Western contributors are in broad agreement about them. In so far as the orthodoxy of the first is a Japanese orthodoxy, it reflects attitudes which Western Japanologists absorb with their training. In so far as social science is a Western construct, it is one which Japanese social scientists accept.

There is not the same measure of agreement about the third approach to Japanese society found in these pages, the ramifications of a less formal concern with "what Japan is like". There is a Western version of this which tends to focus on curious (baths; bean-bags; *ninja*;

On shifting ground

Brian Moeran

ROBERT J. SMITH
Japanese Society
176pp. Cambridge University Press. £12.50.
052124843 X

Not surprisingly, Robert J. Smith treads cautiously in the minefield that lies around all writers on Japan. Convinced that neither the Late Development nor Convergence theories can account for Japan's successful industrialization, and wary of the intentional popularity and misleading contents of a number of recent books on Japanese society, Professor Smith argues that "it is just conceivable that a society which challenges us in our most cherished certitudes of organizational and technological superiority has arrived at its present position by another route, acting on different premises and proceeding in a direction we have not taken". To some this may sound like a further retreat into cultural solipsism, but Smith paints a sympathetic, and true-to-life, portrait of Japanese society. Putting to excellent illustrative use his profound knowledge of Japanese language and culture, he shows us why he thinks that Japan is different from the West, and allows us to brood upon our own deficiencies.



Is Shinsui's watercolour of a geisha playing the shamisen, a three-stringed fretless instrument; she slips her thumb along the neck using the sleeve of her under-robe. The picture is reproduced from Liza Cuthfield Dalby's *Geisha* (347pp. University of California Press. \$25. 0520 04742 7) which will be reviewed in a later issue of the TLS.

origami), or on aspects of traditional culture to which the Japanese themselves pay rather less attention than do foreigners (colour-prints; Zen Buddhism). Western interest in such things derives partly from a genre of literature (eg. Chamberlain's *Things Japanese*), partly from the search by press and television for exotic survivals. It finds its way back into Japanese explanations of Japan via an avid Japanese interest in what the rest of the world thinks of it. These volumes include, for example, a separate entry for "Japanese studies abroad".

Among Japanese views of Japan, by contrast, the most recent phase might be better described as a partial rejection of traditional stereotypes. One aspect of this is a welcome for international intellectual fashions, which echoes the Meiji period's passion for "enlightenment". Thus we find in the encyclopedia a group of entries on women in Japanese history, women in Japanese religion, women in the labour force, women's education. There is an emphasis on the cultural importance of "the masses", manifested in articles on popular songs, films (an interest shared by the West) and some of the less familiar literary material like comic magazines. Finally, there are items which suggest the emergence of a new kind of

social awareness: a one-and-a-half page article on the peace movement, contrasting with only 24 lines on patriotism; an interesting, though not readily discoverable, article on the use of gestures in personal communication; another on the psychology of the Japanese people. It is not that these directly contradict orthodoxy. Rather, they imply that much of it is tangential to modern reality.

Indeed, one has to dig quite deep to discover anything that is controversial about the materials. An article is included on Egami "horse-riding" theory, touching the origins of the imperial house, but its ideas are given short shrift in the main history article. Pollution-related diseases are considered at some length without significant reference to their role in politics. More generally, the prevalent Marxist tone of much Japanese writing on history and society is here almost wholly lacking. There are no articles by Inoue Kiyoshi or Toyama Shigeki, for example. Even American critical writing about Japan is very little represented. This is no doubt natural enough in a publication that sets out to provide for "people throughout the world who wish to know more about Japan". It is as well to bear in mind, however, that what it gives is mostly an "establishment" view, both Japanese and American.

First, there is the matter of tradition, a subject much discussed by both Japanologists and Japanese. The Japanese are particularly adept at manipulating the record of their past. A nationalist revolution is called an "Imperial Restoration"; the notion of popular sovereignty, taken from Rousseau and a study of British legal practice, is represented as deriving from the teachings of Mencius. It is the "flexible approach to history" which Smith suggests may be a distinct advantage to any society wishing to transform its institutions quickly and – one might add – with a thoroughness that brooks no dissent.

Second, Japanese society is pervaded by a Confucian concept of order, in particular that of *giri-ninjo*, reciprocal obligations and human feelings, which permeate inter-personal relationships. This is a favourite topic for writers on Japan and is generally used to support the idea of hierarchy. But Smith makes the important point that this web of obligations does not treat hierarchy as an abstract, but as a relative concept. Nothing is fixed, nothing is absolute, for everything is shifting in Japanese social relations.

It is this idea which forms the basis for the third chapter of *Japanese Society*. Dissatisfied with the notion put forward by some observers of Japan that the Japanese are a collection of

The despot's New Order

P. J. Vatikiotis

AFATUTTI AL-SAYYID MARSOT
Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali
300pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.
(paperback, £9.95).
0521 24795 0

A school of younger Egyptian historians now asserts that in the beginning in Egypt was the modern state, and the modern state was founded by the modernizing autocrat Muhammad Ali (1805-48). Until the publication of Afatutti Al-Sayyid Marsot's volume, the only book in English devoted to a study of Muhammad Ali was that of Henry Dodwell, first published in 1931 and reprinted in 1967. One might assume that *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali* supersedes Dodwell's *Founder of Modern Egypt*. But such an assumption would not be wholly warranted. In fact, the two works share much the same approach and focus in so far as they examine Muhammad Ali's domestic policies and his relations with the European Powers, especially Britain and France. There is, however, a difference in emphasis and a fundamental difference in the explanation of Muhammad Ali's policies, as well as his relations with the European powers, and in the two authors' assessment of his originality.

Whereas Dodwell sought to examine the Muhammad Ali episode in the context of the wider European power contests, Professor Marsot pays greater attention to the role of domestic social groups and political forces in Egypt in his emergence as ruler of the country. Then, again differently from Dodwell, she sets out to argue – and prove – that whatever political innovations Muhammad Ali introduced into Egypt "arose from the exigencies of [the] economic system", and that that system was a "refined and expanded" version of a previous one. She objects to the description of Muhammad Ali as the "founder of modern Egypt", because his New Order did not constitute a "total break with the mamluk past".

Marsot's detailed survey of Muhammad Ali's agricultural, industrial, fiscal and other policies, which allowed him to extract maximum revenue for the pursuit of his twin aims of independence from the Ottoman Sultan and the acquisition of a vast trading empire, extending from the Sudan to Arabia and Syria, is based on a wealth of local archives. It is, however, marred by her insistence on the somewhat contrived argument that in all these endeavours Muhammad Ali was propelled by the inexorable forces of economic necessity, and to this extent had no real architectonic role in the construction of a modern Egyptian state

and nation. Ali Bey el Kebir (1763-73) had after all tried it before him and failed. If, as a phenomenally dexterous and imaginative ruler, Muhammad Ali had no choice but to pursue the course set for him by these impersonal forces of history, the fact that the results of his endeavours were different from those obtained by previous rulers of Egypt is not adequately explained. Obviously no "founder" has founded a state *ex nihilo*; no country or society lacks continuity. Yet to speak of a New Order in Egypt in the early nineteenth century is also to speak of the powerful despot who chose to promote it: the impersonal forces on their own could not have created it.

Perhaps Marsot's narrative about how Muhammad Ali eliminated his rivals, intermediaries and middlemen in the Egyptian economy in order to concentrate all power in his hands and to monopolize trade, commerce and manufacturing is more complete than Dodwell's was. The view, however, that Muhammad Ali was not a legitimate monarch is somewhat anachronistic. It begs the question: How many rulers of that period and in that part of the world were legitimate?

More significant is Marsot's contention that England's hostility to Muhammad Ali was strictly and singularly motivated by mercantile and trade considerations. These no doubt were important. To leave it at that, however, is to misread – even to misunderstand – the power-play in Europe of that time. England may not have been opposed to whatever Muhammad Ali did or planned to do within the borders of Egypt; it was his expansion into Arabia and Syria which was viewed with apprehension, especially as it threatened the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The apprehension, moreover, was based on a very particular strategic reasoning. Palmerston, for example, did not come to mistrust Muhammad Ali until 1833-34, when he considered the Egyptian ruler's military encroachments on the Ottoman Empire to be eroding the power of Istanbul and helping the advance of Russia towards the

Bosphorus. He considered the Ottoman Empire, now virtually part of the European state system and assisted by England, to be the better barrier or obstacle to Russian advance, and therefore as also maintaining the peace of Europe.

The question whether Muhammad Ali wished to replace the Ottoman State as the main regional power in the Eastern Mediterranean astride the route to India, or whether he wished merely to strengthen it by reforming it, remains unanswered, and rightly so, since it is an indeterminate one. What Marsot does well, though, is to highlight the use Muhammad Ali made of Egypt and the Egyptians in his pursuit of power at least over the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. It was in this way that Muhammad Ali laid the foundations of a modern Egyptian state and nation. Marsot also sets out well the historical case for Egypt's tendency to independence, especially the domestic and geographical bases for it. She reminds us that Egypt's bid for regional power 150 years ago failed not because of any inherent inadequacies in Egyptians themselves, but because Muhammad Ali's efforts in that direction were frustrated by Europeans, and particularly the British. Yet to quote, as she does, Palmerston's letter to his brother, the British minister in Naples in 1833, saying that Muhammad Ali's real design is to establish an Arabian kingdom, including all the countries in which Arabic is the language. There might be no harm in such a thing in itself, but as it would imply the dismemberment of Turkey, we could not agree to it. Besides the Turk is as good an occupier of the road to India as an active Arab sovereign would be.

It is to recognize the reality of world power – or at least emerging world power – at that time. Finally, what comes through this detailed monograph is the fact that an alien (Albanian) autocrat who considered his Egyptian subjects unfit to govern themselves did, by his actions and policies, provide them with the basis of a revived national identity, the so-called *Egyptianity* Egyptians have spoken of ever since.

The Timescapes of John Fowles

By H. W. FAWKNER

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John Fowles

Remainders

Eric Korn

Nothing like an old book for bringing history to life, I always say, and here, slithering into the hand like a short length of venomous snake, the age of appeasement comes alive with *Adolf Hitler* (80pp. George G. Harrap, London 1935.)

Textually it is selected posies from *Mein Kampf*, compressed and diluted, if such a thing is possible, and the authors are Kurt Schulze and H. E. Lewington, the former, you will observe, being one of their chaps. Oberstudienrektor in Magdeburg to be precise, while the latter is one of ours, actually German Master at the John Ruskin School in Croydon. It is one of Harrap's "Plain Texts in German", a venture which aimed at "producing booklets in the reading of which pupils will require no coercion". Coercion? Dear me, no, hardly the thing for healthy British boys and girls, fresh-faced and glowing from a rough-and-tumble in the playing-field (not together of course), all the more ready to enjoy yarns about a German lad with lots of grit, yarns that describe him giving bullies short shrift, acquiring admirable work habits, and sniffing out the moral shortcomings of various assemblages of "Jews, Social-Democrats and November-traitors."

There are cheery pictures by one C. H. Drummond, whose work I seem to have come across in other boys' adventures of the period, showing der kleine Adolf glowing with precocious leadership qualities, patriotism and general zest. Drummond has a nice line in snarling working men in peaked caps with red stars on, a clear give-away for the unmasking of Foreign Agitators in many a Bumper Fun book; here the agitators (referred to as a "rote Mordpest") are having fun bumping off Horst Wessel, "ein- oder besten und unerschrockensten", says the text and by George he looks it too! "At the subsequent trial", the notes explain, "it was alleged that the crime was actuated by jealous motives over a certain woman and the criminals received comparatively light sentences. However in 1934, under the National Socialist régime, justice was finally done and three persons executed."

The grammatical exercises at the end rather spinelessly avoid any political commitment, restricting themselves to the events of the first few pages and Hitler's early years: "Setzen Sie in Plusquamperfekt", they request, "'Young Hitler carefully studied all the pictures of battles.' "They might so easily have chosen "The international Judaeo-Marxist Conspiracy is the cause of all Germany's woes" as something snappy to be tried out in the future perfect, the aorist and the plusquamwhatever.

But stay! Looking again deep into young Herr Wessel's aryan eyes, we become aware that something is not quite, how you say, kosher. On his sleeve he proudly sports the Party brassard; but the Swastika is the *wrong way round*! At once it becomes clear that the note about the trial is ironic, the drawings subtly subversive, the reference in the preface to the text having been passed by the new special Censor's Bureau in Munich is not a boast but a nudge. H. E. Lewington, and perhaps Kurt Schulze with him, is laughing up his sleeve at the little braggart, in a polite but fearless fashion! The Dunkirk spirit was abroad already! Who do you think, you are kidding, Mr Hitler, when you say old England's done?

The fields of lexicography and grammar are full of hairy indignant caterpillars ("three inches is a very good height indeed") who are convinced that correct speech is the stuff that comes out of their mouths and that any change is for the worse; and there has been a great quantity of fruitless wagging of forelegs at the fearless spread of the new use of "hopefully" as, if I have this right, an adverb qualifying not the action of the main verb, but the sense of the whole clause, giving it a pseudo-optative tinge. Greek and some Amerindian languages do it. With a special form of the verb (the moods of the verb in Menominee, a language once spoken of by linguists than spoken by speakers, express, as moods should, the speaker's feeling about the probability and desirability of what he is reporting); other languages, Melanesian for argument's sake, do it with a particle (im-

agine "Melanesians do it with a particle" as a bumper-sticker); English is beginning to do it with "hopefully". Myself, I welcome it, having long felt the need of an optative for expressing shades of meaning like "let's you do it". But has anyone pointed out that "mercifully" has traditionally been used with this sort of meaning? If I say, for example, "Mercifully, Roger Scruton has not written an article in today's *Times*", I am not suggesting that the quality of mercy in this instance inheres in Mr Scruton, but in God, an almost entirely different Person. "Mercifully" stands for "... and that's a mercy", as "hopefully" stands for "... at least that is what I hope", and as "gratefully" is beginning to be used to mean "and that is something we should be grateful for". I heard someone say, recently, "thankfully, she married the curate"; but I have no idea in which sense they were using it. Man on the radio, talking about how to interrupt the iron chain of circumstances that leads people to get drowned (stay as far away from the water as possible, was his major recommendation) said something like "thankfully, she was rescued", a profitable bit of ambiguity. (He also said "water is with us to stay", but that's another story.)

There are dolls of Jackie Collins and the girl from *Loveboat*, dolls in strictly limited editions with real sables and real jools and real price-tags that say \$15,000; there are pigs with the faces of Presidents and inevitably Presidents with the faces of pigs; but not everything in the American toy-shop is frivolity. There has been a revival of the tradition of the children's book as a medium not for talking to children but for giving them a talking-to, the tradition of Trimmer and Sherwood and Sewell and Alger, given a Reaganomic facelift, and in the van of the revival, the revival van, is the inaptly named Peter Pan Industries of Newark, New Jersey, publishers of the "Let's Talk About" series, a series written by Joy Wilt Berry, a name in respect of which wild horses would not deflect me from absolute straightfacedness by so much as a second of arc.

"Let's Talk About" translates as "Let's Me Talk and Let's You listen, nodding your head vigorously from time to time", another of those indirect pseudo-optatives with which the language of person-manipulation is so full, an attitude betrayed by the back-cover claim "The Let's Talk About Series can do the talking for you". (There is a convention, had you noticed, that children do not read back covers, which can be used for Super Secret Messages to Grown-Ups! "Mama, what is a cat-ing e-vocation of dawn-ing sex-u-al-ity?" Ms Joy Berry takes a couple of extra inside pages to complain that "for too long we parents have been made to feel that we alone are responsible for our children's successes or failures. This is an overwhelming and unfair burden" (like *Welfare* or *Medicaid* or the Third World). From now on, says this supply-side homilist, children can take their own decisions, especially if we tell them what to do. The series is EDUCATIONALLY, DEVELOPMENTALLY, and PSYCHOLOGICALLY sound ("In addition to my being a parent, I am an educator and child developmentalist" says Joy Wilt Berry). There is another page of self-praise and empty promises about improved parent-child relationships ("before you know it, you and your child will be going in the same direction more of the time. This is because you will both be focusing on the same issues and functioning from the same premises"). This post-word concludes with the words "thank you for letting my work become a part of your lives", a bit of pseudo-humility that would seem hyperbolic in the colophon of the *Divine Comedy* or the Five Books of Moses.

What about the text? I've got *SHOWING OFF* here, and it is thirty-two vigorously illustrated pages of nagging: "Some people show off to try to prove that they are smarter than others. They think that if they know more than others, they will be better. These people are wrong. Or plain: When you are around a person who is showing off - 'you may feel inferior (not so important as the other person)' 'you may feel insecure (as though you cannot do

anything well)' 'you may think that the person is not (fun to be with)' 'you may decide you don't want to be around

I have to admit that Joy Wilt Berry makes me feel inferior, insecure, and I may decide I don't want to be around. "Do not tell other people what to do just so that you will seem better than they" is another piece of advice from J. W. B., who only tells other people what to do in order to give children a chance to assume responsibility for their own lives and go in the same direction more of the time. (Did I point out that the "Let's Talk About" series also "allows children to explore themselves openly", which sounds a good deal more permissive than it intends?)

Anyhow, any child faced with a rack of, placed on the rack of the "Let's Talk About" series, is in for a comprehensive grilling. I have a list of eighteen topics and that's just a beginning: *Lying, Cheating, Being Destructive, Snooping, Being Rude, Whining, Being Lazy, Disobeying, Breaking Promises, Fighting, Stealing, Teasing, Tattling*, and generally *Having Fun*. I have to report that *Being Destructive* was represented only by one scribbled-on copy, while *Stealing* was absent altogether.

Not but what a little hostile pressure might not be called for: the conclusion of *The Child's Book of Manners* (which represents the Roosevelt-Carter Great Society tradition) is, appositely: "If you are nice to people they will be nice to you. If everyone is nice to everyone else the world will be a happy place." Not the conclusion of the two-dozen-odd new books about not talking to strangers; and not the conclusion of Miss Joy Wilt Berry who wants to teach

What all schoolchildren learn. Those to whom evil is done Do evil in return.

There is an advertisement in a New England magazine by somebody who offers "the finest in legal photography", as if anyone would want illegal photography or advertise it if they did. But what is offered, apart from "Lowest Prices and a Reliable Service, which I can interpret, is a mite baffling:

*Product Liability
*Day-in-the-Life
*Medicals
*Fall Downs.

Fall Downs is easy enough, and I myself would be quite eager to purchase a picture of autumn foliage spreading over low rounded hillslopes, especially if I was sure it contained nothing illicit, but how can you photograph a day, and why would you want to? *Ulysses* is pretty much a day-in-the-life, but it is hard to see how tasteless snapshots could be made illustrating it. I suppose it could be a way of grangerizing a book of memoirs: *July 19, 1668* - good dinner and company that pleased me mightily (see *attached video*). There's a restaurant in Boston called "Legal Seafoods", but I always assumed they served claims to attorneys. A video of a Day-in-the-life ("24hr On Call) of many an attorney would be worth paying money for. "Mail this coupon today for free price list", it says, so maybe they have files on all of us, and can offer the negatives of all kinds of interesting scenes we never knew were observed.

How to enrage your bookseller: no 258 of an occasional series. "But it says six shillings on the spine." "Of course I wouldn't dream of selling it, but I was just curious." "But it says thirty-one and sixpence on the spine." "I had that when I was a little girl." "I can see I'd better look through my chuck-outs a bit more carefully." "Where do you get all your books?" "It must be very old. It belonged to my grand-father." (No more than three of these should be attempted on any one bookseller).

Leave on his answering machine a slurred request for *Her-Bak "Chuck-Pea"* by Isla Schwaier de Lubric. (If you are wondering, it's an

Egyptological fantasy, full of *tekh, Neta, Ptah*, and *Ptah's Ka*.)

It would be disingenuous to pretend the customers of Knockabout Comics and Aftah Books are in the main professional mycologists and students of botanical pharmacology. The titles they import, and which have been seized and held by the police for sixteen months pending prosecution (a delay equivalent to a savage fine, whatever the outcome of this week's Old Bailey trial), include *A Guide to British Paludicyns*, *Herbal Aphrodisiacs*, and *A Child's Garden of Grass*. By no means all the books held are cultish, recreational, or advocate illegality; they include *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (a copy of William Burroughs's *Junkie*, his first book, published pseudonymously as an Ace double-header paperback in 1953; it must have sold millions of copies since then. It is clearly only a matter of chance that they didn't seize *The Grass is Singing*, *Snow White and The Coke*, *Anthrax and Allied Industries Yearbook*, and in their leaflets, the defendants mispell *Junkie*, and claim darkly that De Quincey is only tolerated because he "exists in many leather-bound editions on members of the establishment's bookshelves", a sentence that really gets up my nose, to coin a phrase; but they have come by their paranoia honestly, that is to say on the uncomfortable frontier where your right to read and mine to sell books is attacked and defended. They are being charged not under drugs legislation, which would seem legitimate, or at least possible (a conspiracy charge under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 has just been dropped) but under the Obscene Publications Acts of 1959 and 1964, some legal wit having decided that depravity and corruption are not limited to sexual matters (I'm with him there of course), and therefore that a "tendency to deprave and corrupt" may be displayed by any book that someone disapproves of. Out goes *Oblomov* for painting an attractive picture of sloth, out goes every cookery book for counselling and facilitating gluttony, out goes Thomas Paine, out goes Thoreau, snip! out go *Casino Royale* and *The Queen of Spades* (offences against the Gaming Act), snip! (did you know that the Obscene Publications Squad had a sound to that figured a scissor cutting a page? Some printdealers would proudly wear it too) out go all left-wing books and most right-wing books and the *Rights of Man* and *Biohazard* and *Little Black Sambo* and *Oliver Twist* and the Jorjacks books, shopped by the League Against Cruel Sports, out goes the *Sermon on the Mount*, grassed up by Mr Shalom Al-Jihad of the League of Extremist Copts, Hebrews, and Arabs Against "Orrible Interfering Moderates (Leeluna' im!), and out goes you!

Knockabout Comics, whose case comes on first, is at 249 Kinsal Road, London W10, and needs all kinds of support. It is a lovely sunny spring day and the temperature is rising rapidly towards Fahrenheit 451.

Letters

'Revolution in Time'

Sir, - Without taking up the many comments and animadversions of John North's review of my *Revolution in Time* (April 6), which have not persuaded (dissuaded) me, I should like to respond regarding two issues of larger significance. The first concerns his rejection of the argument I put forward about the monastic origin of the mechanical clock, which began as an automated bell. He questions what he calls my speculation that "something new had arrived" with the introduction of the word "clock"; and he says that it seems "probable" to him that "the first mechanical timepieces were indeed astronomical" rather than simple timekeepers.

His scepticism, I confess, astonishes me, since my argument substantially accords with his own writing on the subject, as my footnote references to his work show. Over and beyond these, let me cite relevant passages from North's remarkable three-volume work on *Richard of Wallingford*, the fourteenth-century abbot who built the first astronomical clock "of which we have detailed knowledge":

1. Regarding the character of the very earliest mechanical timekeepers: the "old clock" at Norwich, which North dates to 1273 (hence perhaps the first clock to appear in the written record) was, he suggests, a "mechanical clock, however rudimentary" (II, 316) - in other words, hardly astronomical.

2. Regarding monastic versus astronomical origins: the mechanism of Richard's extraordinary astronomical clock is given by North as further evidence "for a thesis hinted at by J. Drummond Robertson, that the origins of the first mechanical escapement are to be sought in the monastic alarm mechanisms of the early Middle Ages" (II, 331).

3. Regarding the newness of the clock and the priority of simple versus complex mechanisms: "simple mechanical horologes, such as for bell-ringing, were, if not previously commonplace, at least not unknown. The fact that Richard's text does not go into details over the construction of the escapement reinforces this view, while the dozen or more passing references in records of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, not all by any means ambiguous as between sundial and mechanical clock, all point to some new invention of about that time, which led to a rapid diffusion of the use of geared timekeeping devices. The invention in question must have been that of a mechanical escapement: monastic clockwork in the literal sense - that is, bell-work - had been set in motion by a half-hydraulic, half-mechanical arrangement at least two centuries before" (II, 362). And North makes a point of the appearance in the thirteenth century, that is, well before Richard's time, of a profession of clockmakers, among them perhaps Richard's own father (II, 317, 370).

If Dr North now wants to change his mind on this subject, that is his privilege, although it would be helpful to have a statement of his reasons. I would be happy to take notice of his new interpretation in translations of my own

book, by way of fairness to my readers and to the issue. In the meantime, to use his phrase, I think he has put his money on the wrong horse.

That horse is the thesis of the late Derek de Solla Price, who asserted that "the ordinary time-telling devices such as sundials, sand glasses, and the elementary water clocks", but rather "should be considered as a degenerate branch from the main stem of mechanized astronomical devices". North implies that I have "misconceived" Price's arguments. I do not think so. Derek Price and I engaged in an extended correspondence and in one public debate. He was very helpful to me and never took refuge in "somewhat paradoxical utterances" - as North describes them. *C'était là le moindre de ses défauts*. His untimely death is a personal loss to me as well as to scholarship.

Our correspondence began with an inquiry from me asking him whether he still believed and meant what he had written on this subject. He did, and in the end we agreed to disagree. North's effort to give a new meaning to the words "degenerate" and "degeneration" will not change the written record. Price was convinced that the first use of a mechanical escapement was in an astronomical device and derived its inspiration from astronomical needs; that the study of time-measurement was an unfortunate diversion; that medieval Europe did not build clocks because it wanted and needed them, but rather learned about them inadvertently as a by-product of these astronomical mechanisms.

The facts simply contradict this. Nor does it help to try to have things both ways: to say, No, there was no loss of technical knowledge or expertise; and then say, Yes, there was - witness Richard of Wallingford's lonely solution to the problem of velocity drive. It is the inversion of the normal sequence of invention, from rudimentary to sophisticated, that requires such lawyerly acrobatics. Nor do I "beg the question" when I say (not "imply") that the clock made possible automated astraria/planetaria rather than the reverse. That is my inference from the historical experience as established by such scholars as John North, among others.

My second point is briefer. North says that it "might be dangerous to test" by the German experience the link I propose between Protestantism and the clock and watch trade. Not at all. We do have a test (cited in the book, p 93) for the most important centre of German clock manufacture, namely Augsburg, in the period 1500-1700. The data show that of those 189 makers for whom we have religious affiliation (out of 284), more than five out of six were Protestant. This is an astonishing statistic for a city of mixed population in an overwhelmingly Catholic area.

DAVID S. LANDES.
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'A Need to Testify'

Sir, - Belatedly my attention has been drawn to Mr P. N. Furbank's review of Iris Origo's *A Need to Testify* (April 20), which impels me to point out a few of his inaccuracies. He writes that the four brief lives included "are connected by a fifth life (the author's own)". Perhaps this is intended to describe an impersonal essay on "Biography: True and False"? As a joke it misfires.

Although he acquits the author of fabrication he implies that she was guilty of "suppression, or anyway reservation". As an example of this he complains: "We are not told exactly what went wrong between Salvemini and his second wife Fernande Luchaire." Who on earth can know exactly what goes wrong between any man and his wife? In the case of Fernande Luchaire, the widow of one of Salvemini's colleagues, those who really knew her considered her a solid, serious if pedantic French *bourgeoise*. Salvemini told her that he was marrying her because they were both middle-aged and lonely. He had lost his adored first wife and five children in the Messina earthquake, whereas she had a son and daughter whom he could care for and educate. When the tragedy of Jean Luchaire occurred Salvemini flew from Marvard to comfort her to

the best of his ability. The letters of a mutual friend, too private for publication, make this clear. With her maternal obsession poor Fernande could be wearisome. Had she joined Salvemini after his return to Italy, the reunion would have been disastrous for both them.

The application of the word "reverential" to Marchesa Origo's enthusiasm has a pejorative shade which strikes me as unfair. Evidently Mr Furbank is prejudiced against such romantics as de Bosis: we could do with a little more of what he dubs "flummery". It is strange that he makes no mention of Iris Origo's last chapter about Silone, which many would consider the most moving in this vivid and beautiful book.

HAROLD ACTON.
Villa La Pietra, 50139 Florence.

'The Sinking of the Belgrano'

Sir, - May I conclude the correspondence on the Belgrano on a conciliatory note? Alexander Haig's memoirs as published on April 1 did not read as Arthur Gavshon has stated (Letters, May 4) with regard to events on May 2, but subsequent corrections have made it clear that Gavshon was right as to what Haig was trying to say, so my letter of April 20 was unfair. I could point out that Haig's account of the April 1982 negotiations is still at variance with Rice and Gavshon's, but the lesson I draw from all of this is the unreliability of Haig's memory.

Otherwise I would have thought that the *Panorama* programme on April 20 more than supported my interpretation of the military situation on May 1 and 2, 1982.

LAWRENCE FREEDMAN.
Department of War Studies, King's College, Strand, London WC2.

The Middle Way

Sir, - I was grateful to John Bossy for the courtesy and balance of his review of my new book *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (May 11). Allow me to say, however, that although I was amused by his lengthy speculation that I am about to become a Roman Catholic, I feel obliged to set his mind at rest. Anglicanism is, as everyone knows, not easy to categorize internally, but I belong to that large body of churchmen who are usually thought of as being neither High nor Low, but somewhere in the middle.

EDWARD NORMAN.
Peterhouse, Cambridge.

Oxprof

Sir, - If you are a candidate for the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford, as I am, you must go into the market place like Coriolanus and ask for votes.

My aim is to save Oxford from itself - from the incestuous grip of the Oxmen and Oxwomen who have stifled it for so long. I am a genuine Cambridge poet, once supervised by Dr Leavis, lectured to by I. A. Richards, fairly friendly with Guy Burgess and Anthony Blunt. I have a large body of work to my credit, I have tutored students, given lectures. I have even been a "writer in residence" and presided over "workshops". I therefore urge all Ox MAs to vote for me at their Alma Mater on May 31 or June 2, and end the long process of Oxidization to which the appointment has been subjected.

GAVIN EWART.
57 Kenilworth Court, Lower Richmond Road, London SW15.

Children's Literature

Sir, - May I correct an impression possibly left by Hugh Brogan's shot-in-the-dark (May 4), that *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* "has drawn largely" on Opie researches? The only help Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Prichard had from us, while writing their substantial and intricate book, was with the details of the entry headed OPIE.

IONA OPIE.
Westfield House, West Liss, Hampshire.

Basil Blackwell

What is Politics?

The Activity and Its Study
Edited by ADRIAN LEFTWICH

This book addresses the most central issues in our understanding and study of politics. What is politics? What activities does the term refer to? Is politics only about government and governing? And is government defined by the legitimate use of force, or by the processes involved when people have to make collective choices? The book discusses whether the various definitions of politics are incompatible, or in fact only refer to different levels and kinds of politics. 176 pages, hardback £12.50 (0 631 13486 7) paperback £4.50 (0 631 13553 7)

Social Accountability and Selfhood

JOHN SHOTTER

This book tackles anew some of the most fundamental questions in psychology. What, as human beings, are we to one another? How should we treat one another as being? In what ways do we learn about our world? John Shotter argues that our reality is constituted for us by the ways in which we render our activities accountable to one another in our daily social lives. 266 pages, £22.50 (0 631 13021 7)

Social Planning

A Strategy for Socialist Welfare
Edited by ALAN WALKER

This book argues that those who have tried to see how the welfare state works - or fails to work - have not taken a wide enough view. They must look afresh at the goals of social policy, and how resources could be distributed more effectively in order to prompt social welfare. 288 pages, hardback £17.50 (0 85520 453 2) paperback £6.95 (0 85520 454 0)

Social Choice and Justice

KENNETH ARROW

Beginning with his seminal paper of 1950 which gave birth to the subject of social choice, this book by the winner of the 1972 Nobel Prize also presents a normative theory of social action based upon individual preferences. Professor Arrow develops the theory further and explores its implications for the concept of justice in the economy. 240 pages, £25.00 (0 631 13339 9)

After Stagflation

Alternatives to Economic Decline
Edited by JOHN CORNWALL

Eric Lundberg, Richard Lipsey, James Tobin, Wynne Godley, Lars Osberg and Alasdair Smith contribute to this penetrating examination of ways of curing economic stagnation. They discuss inflation, disinflation and stagnation, the policies possible and the pyrrhic victories they may produce. John Cornwall introduces the book with a substantial overview of the subject. 192 pages, £19.50 (0 85520 717 5)

COMMENTARY

Peccadilloes

Harold Hobson

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS
Kingdom of Earth
Hampstead Theatre

Michael Attenborough has auspiciously begun his management of the Hampstead Theatre with a spirited production by Kenneth Macmillan of a little-known play, written by Tennessee Williams in 1967, called *Kingdom of Earth*. It has never been seen in London before, but it doubtless will not be neglected in future, for it contains – something extremely rare in Williams – a really likeable character: someone who puts up a reckless fight against the misfortunes and horrors which Williams used to delight to pile upon the people in his plays.

It is true that, set in a farmhouse in the Mississippi Delta, *Kingdom of Earth* has the customary Williams catalogue of *choses d'années*: degradation and decay, men's brutal persecution of women, drugs, disease, perversion, mother-fixation, crudity of language, transsexuality, hatred, and many other things. But all this darkness is pierced by the bright light of Nicholas McAuliffe's Myrtle. It must be admitted that Myrtle, just married to Lot, the young owner of the farmhouse, has her peccadilloes. She is susceptible to avarice; she is a nymphomaniac, ready to indulge in oral sex with any man who comes along; she is a harlot, as Lot screams at her, coughing up his one remaining lung; and – a point on which Williams lays unusual stress – she is not capable of illumination by religious instruction.

But what is exciting about Myrtle is her courage and her cheerfulness. She had been hoping to settle down, for the first time in her life, to a quiet, safe, domestic existence, but finds herself bullied by both her husband and his half-brother Chicken (Stephen Rea), who manages what might be called the estate, though it seems little more than mud, perpetually threatened by the bursting Mississippi. She is not dismayed by this; and though she notices Lot's constant references to his mother, she is too innocent – yes, actually too innocent – to realize what the real situation had been before her mother-in-law had died. When Lot, in a

final and frightening paroxysm, falls into his death-agony, she is more surprised than the audience to find him dressed in his mother's clothes. A half-forgotten book by Hugh Walpole begins: "Tisn't life that matters. It's the courage you bring to it". Courage is what Myrtle had, and Blanche Du Bois, whose situation somewhat resembled hers, emphatically had not. Blanche aroused pity, and Myrtle admiration, a dazzling exception in Williams's sorry procession of drop-outs, perverts, drug-addicts and cowards.

Kingdom of Earth may not be the most achingly poetic of Tennessee Williams's plays, but it is easily the most optimistic. Myrtle does – literally as well as metaphorically – come out on top. For when at the end of the play the angry Mississippi floods the lower parts of the house, she clammers onto the roof. Accompanied by Chicken, it is even suggested that they will enact Romeo and Juliet till the waters subside.

This is absurdly melodramatic, and there are moments in the play when Williams seems to lose all sense of theatrical reality. Half way through there is a sort of General Post in which Myrtle dashes upstairs and down in an effort to rob Chicken on behalf of Lot, and Lot on behalf of Chicken. This borders on the ridiculous. But when all this is discounted it still remains a fact that the courage in *Kingdom of Earth* is an inspiring thing. Nor is it confined to Myrtle. With a generous impartiality Williams gives it also to Lot (David Taylor). This man looks as weak as a moonbeam; his cough is terrible to bear. But he has a strength of will that cannot be broken. That it is an evil will is beside the point: evil or good, he will not let any personal danger scupper him out of his standards. Nothing can diminish his hatred of his fellow-creatures. There are two things he wants, and two only: to preserve the memory of his mother, and to prevent his half-brother from succeeding him in his inheritance. There is something splendid as well as revolting in the spectacle of this physically wrecked man facing the awful spectre of dissolution and seeing in it nothing of terror, but only a weapon for the ruin of others. Taylor plays him with an entrancing Southern drawl, and a graveyard charm.

cially successful, is far from content; he is trying to write a play (which does the expected thing and turns out to be the play we have just witnessed) but is subject to constant interruptions, irritations, irrelevances; he is trying to give up smoking also; and, in his tiny sententiousness, he is very trying.

Put upon by a fatuous novelist friend, Gaston (Joe Melia, miscast) whose alternate wheedling, sponging and self-aggrandizing propel him fast but of our affection but not Saint-Pé's, by a mistress whose misguided hope is that Saint-Pé will further her theatrical career, and by an ex-wife, a son and two daughters who assume that cash will flow in their direction as by a natural right (though one daughter also – preposterously – expects Dad to broach the subject of divorce with her forbidding husband); annoyed by high blood pressure and the doctor's orders, by some malign deity intent on bringing his lovely old house down, and by the fickleness of the Muse, Saint-Pé ralls unmemorably away, or chuckles with half-hearted resignation as he shells out. Things go from bad to worse. The friend's "obscure", by implication unreadable, novel earns him the Goncourt, the others' demands grow more insistent, their self-deceptions more contemptible, the dramatic ironies more heavily-handed. There are glances towards Molière; La Rochefoucauld is invoked. These references only signal the gap between intention and achievement. The characters and their situations are the stock ones of farce; the writing, with neither surprise nor bite, is closer to sitcom than the matutinal tradition of French moralists; the whole small world of Saint-Pé is fabulously corrupt and unappealing, unrelieved by felicity of motive or expression.

Recurring clashes

Peter Kemp

THOMAS MALORY
The Morte d'Arthur
BBC2

Visualizing Arthurian England seems a perennial preoccupation. Cameos from Camelot never stop cropping up. Painters have repeatedly illustrated the Round Table narratives. Poets, when dealing with them, tend to emphasize their pictorial aspects: as with Tennyson, who called his Arthurian cycle *Idylls of the King* since "idyll" literally means "little picture" – which each tale was intended to be.

Given all of this, it's probably inevitable that the BBC, when filming John Barton's rendering of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, should decide to garnish it with extraneous visual material, even though Barton's performance – previously presented as a one-man show for friends – would have made fine television if left entirely alone. As it is, the director Gillian Lynne's addition of tableaux performed by silent actors, as Barton narrates, brings things perilously close to farce – largely because of her inability to perceive the real nature of Malory's work. "We make his visions float before your eyes", she has boasted. But "visions" suggests something preciously remote from Malory's almost business-like tales: far from floating, what he offers is brisk, brusque, and almost tumbles over itself in the telling.

Admirably sturdy and sensitive, Barton's portrayal of Malory exactly picks up his headlong, almost obsessively voluble style – sentences, hectically clipped together by "And"s, or "But"s, pelling pell-mell through tangles of incident; carnage occurring at breakneck speed; violently abrupt words, like "brast" (a repeated favourite), vigorously shoving on the action. Streamlining the work, Barton – who concentrates on the last two books of Malory's anthology of tales – intelligently prunes and dovetails his material. The catalogues of names, of which Malory is so fond, are usually jumped over, so that the stories, with their recurrent armed clashes, move at an even more cracking pace.

Narrating events as Malory in his Newgate

cell, Barton powerfully conveys the muddled and muddled fixation on the code. An opening résumé of some of the tales for which Malory was incarcerated points the gulf between the realities of his life and the ideals of the Round Table. But, coming to Barton's tone and facial expressions brings the way Malory's attachment to his subject, kind of class-nostalgia, a relish for the language of an ethos that he sees himself as a latter-day representative of. Pointedly editing Malory's closing phrase, the dramatization ends with the phrase "Sir Thomas Malory, knight of the Bath" as he lingers on the last of the words is a masterly blend of defiance, pain and shame.

This recounting of the stories is done with a tactful energy. (too: the narrative is kept up and fast, rhythms are compellingly varied, voices just characterized enough. So, though, all this is distractingly accompanied by mimes – choreographed by Gillian Lynne – that are crassly at variance with everything Barton brings out from the text. Where Malory is rapid, rugged, down-to-earth, Lynne's tableaux are limp with enfeebled artifice. Malory's Malory talks with garrulous tractacy about the battle between two grim hosts: "an hundred thousand men", she has for a ures gently raising swords and lances toward each other as if performing some kind of dance. Even more bizarre are the stick-like bouncings affected by the knights, signify horse riding. Staginess is rampant. The celot and Guinevere sway and swim through sequences of balletic sentimentality. Malory's characters – so speakingly realized by Barton – are reduced by Lynne to melodramatic mimes. In this context, lines take on unintended absurd significance: "Make thou no more, gaugel" said Sir Gawaine. "But the King Arthur spake no word thereof to me". Framing all this is a décor from Disneyland – cardboard cronellations and edenskies. Gaudy tableaux prevent Barton's paintings of Malory's pictures reaching the mind's eye as vividly as they ought. It's this first-rate performance can't be taken from its ersatz framework, and be presented again, perhaps on radio, unencumbered by benighted dumb-show.

that he seems, as Saint-Pé, so thoroughly poled; there's a hint of Balzac about his but nothing else remotely French or witty about him. The principals, so the programme announces, are got up by St Laurent, and the sad fact is that the values of St Laurent are more pervasive here than those of Saint-Beuve. The question to which there can be one answer only, not cheering but not out irony, is: what induced Michael Frayn to lend one or more of his many talents to this adaptation?

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 174
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send the answers so that they reach this office not later than June 8. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration. Entries, marked "Author, Author 174" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on June 15.

1 "Couldn't something temporary be done with a teaspoon?"

If he had meant to bring the subject prematurely to a close, he could not have done it more effectively.

2 "I only wanted to help you get on."
"Yes – showing me off, like as if I was your belonging. You'd like to take me up to bed like the silver tea-pot – and a silver tea-pot 'ud be about as much use to you, I reckon."

3 For this his hands in weakness
"Tired as a reaper, feeling the small of his back."

Competition No 170
Winner: Francis Wyndham
Answers:
1 I dine with our Monday Evening Club, which is a group of English and Americans. We dine at the Connaught. I have to address them afterwards. It is a difficult situation may arise between Russia and the USA. The Russians will give a gigantic reward which may entail the suppression of the independence of ten small powers.
Murrow refers to my "soul-satisfying poem".
Harold Nicolson, *Diaries*, February 22, 1944.

2 There was a Tuesday Club at the Chelsea Crossintheal where the young bloods of the time used to congregate and drank deep on a percentage of the expense so that he was left galled and weary have drunk the most.
R. L. Stevenson, *Walter of Herminion*, chapter 1.

3 "And what in the world is the Wednesday Club?"
"I don't know your ladies, but the Wednesday Club is this thing. I don't mean you and me, but together, but all those deluded beings in the room. It is New York trying to be like London. Henry James, *The Bostonians*, chapter 10.

The consolations of painting

Marc Jordan

Acquisition in Focus: Edgar Degas, Hélène Rouart in her Father's Study
National Gallery, until June 10

Degas himself would surely have applauded the tact and intelligence with which one of his most impressive and psychologically wry portraits has been explored by Dillian Gordon in this latest show in the National Gallery's "Acquisition in Focus" series. Three years ago the gallery bought "Hélène Rouart in her Father's Study", to add to an already impressive collection of pictures by the artist, including the famous and much reproduced "Beach Scene" and the vertiginous "La La at the Cirque Fernando", but no work of this monumental scale. In Degas's 150th anniversary year and with a big exhibition of his drawings on show in West Berlin it is the right moment to have brought together a number of related works and preliminary studies to trace the evolution and tease out some of the meanings of this complicated, evasive and essentially private painting.

Degas was in many ways a deeply conservative painter. The plein-air landscape experiments of Monet and Pissarro and Sisley he dismissed contemptuously as a kind of outdoor sport. For him painting was an activity that took place in the studio and only after a meticulous process of thoughtful planning and preparation. As might be expected from such a great admirer of Ingres, the human figure lay at the core of his art. Portraits play a correspondingly large part in his oeuvre. But unlike Ingres, as a man of independent means Degas did not need to accept portrait commissions. By drawing his sitters from the small circle of his family and close friends Degas could pursue his aesthetic aims unhampered by the vanity of paying customers. And he could and did give his portraits a degree of psychological ambiguity which would not have been acceptable in more public works.

Hélène Rouart was the daughter of Degas's schoolfriend Henri Rouart, a wealthy Parisian industrialist, amateur painter and passionate collector. In the troubled years that followed the death of Degas's own father and the collapse of the family bank he became an intimate of the Rouarts. In their house and at their dinner-table he seems to have lost much of the shyness and asperity that dogged his relations with the larger world. Captivated by Hélène's red hair, Degas had already in the 1870s painted a portrait of her as a child on her father's knee. Dillian Gordon has managed to

borrow this rarely seen picture from a private collection in New York. It gives its own silent commentary on the later big portrait. Its relaxed, stable composition, the father's arm encircling the daughter's waist, reflects the domestic calm Degas sought *chez Rouart* in the rue de Lisbonne.

1886, the year Degas painted the grown-up Hélène surrounded by carefully chosen objects from her father's collection, seems to have been one of alarming disturbance in the solid structure of the Rouarts' life. Mme Rouart died after an illness. Hélène married. What can

only be described as Degas's surrogate family dissolved around him. In a letter to Henri Rouart Degas spoke, in more than usually pessimistic mood, of the distraction and consolation he found in watching and recording the movement of people and things; "if", he added, "there is still consolation to be had for one so unhappy".

The portrait of Hélène Rouart in her father's study, like so many of Degas's paintings, is unfinished, and it was still in his studio when he died in 1917. But if the surface is in places ugly or ambiguous its compositional stability is un-



"Hélène Rouart in her Father's Study", from the exhibition reviewed here.

nervingly complete. Hélène is locked as firmly into place on the canvas by the overlapping rectangles of the pictures, hangings and display case which surround her as by prison grilles. She is pressed back into an impossible space against the wall of the room by the receding diagonals of her father's empty, out-size chair, and his desk piled with papers. Unlike the Van Dyckian prototypes mentioned by Dr Gordon in her catalogue, self-confident mistresses of all they survey, Hélène seems the en-croached-upon victim of her surroundings. Yet it is worth pointing out that this composition only emerged at a very late stage in the picture's evolution. Two magnificent pastel studies record that a healthy buxom Hélène was to have perched, one leg casually swinging, on the arm of a chair placed in an airy cube of space.

The connection between circumstances and aesthetic choice defies analysis. Did the illness of Mme Rouart suggest a change of plan and mood to Degas? The prominence given to the Egyptian funerary deity which stands on the desk beside Hélène adds force to this argument. Gordon identifies the barely legible drawing on the wall behind Hélène with a Millet "Peasant Girl" once in the Rouart collection and now on loan from the Louvre. She might also have pointed out in this context that the slumped pose of the girl in the drawing is the classic one of *Melancholia*. Or, are we perhaps in the presence of a commoner but still sad domestic drama? The absent acquisitive father is an oppressive presence in the painting. His daughter wears, almost in the manner of livery, a demure version of the blue dress in another prized possession of the Rouart collection, Corot's "La Dame en bleu". Or should we think of Degas's private avocations? Hanging on the wall behind Hélène is a second Corot from her father's collection, a "View of the Bay of Naples with the Castel dell'Ovo". Perhaps this is simply a picturesque evocation of the city where Degas's father was born. But the choice of a view which includes that medieval Alcatraz with all its gloomy associations makes it an equivocal sign.

Gordon's touch is light. She nowhere insists on fitting the allusions she uncovers into a single pattern of meaning. Her exhibition does the most important job of all, it leads us back to look at and think about this elusive, disturbing and beautiful portrait.

The catalogue of the exhibition, *Degas: Hélène Rouart in her Father's Study* by Dillian Gordon. (20pp. National Gallery. £1.50 0 901791 92 X) is available from the National Gallery.

Trying times

Alan Jenkins

JEAN ANOUILH
Number One
Adapted by Michael Frayn
Queen's Theatre

There is a not very sharp satirical edge to this curious and rather creaky farce. Looking after number one, egotism and self-deception, raised to a principle that has ousted the putative deencies of yesterday, carry us from one revelation of moral turpitude to another, but with less subtlety or polish than might be hoped. There is a dogged, sour and relentless note to much of it, a dry crackle where wit should be, an embarrassing sense of triviality – not so much because Jean Anouilh misses his targets, but because the targets seem so little worth tilting at, authorial anger and excretion so bewilderingly misplaced. Most disconcerting is the undertone of alternating fear and boastfulness in the moralizing; not real indignity but the painfully insubstantial phantoms of a somewhat complacently embittered mind, a mind very much out of touch, are being attacked.

We are ostensibly offered an exposure of the hollowiness and self-interest at the core of "smart" Parisian literary-artistic life, of its laughable hypocrisies and pretensions. What we have is a confused and not very laughable spectacle of unconvincing prejudices, Paris and the West End at their most provincial. Anouilh sets a middle-aged, gony and well-heeled playwright, Leon Saint-Pé, to fulminate against doctors, plumbers, literary critics, intellectual fashions, experimental writing, the state of the art, the way we live now and, of course, self-interest. Saint-Pé, though finan-

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Brian Aldiss's novels include *Heliconia Summer*, 1983.

W. G. Beasley's *The Meiji Restoration* was published in 1973.

B. C. Bloomfield is Director of the India Office Library and Records.

Jorge Calado is Professor of Physical Chemistry at Cornell University.

Alec Clifton-Taylor's *Another Six English Towns* will be published later this year.

Judith Cherniak is working on a biography of Clara Schumann.

Valentine Cunningham is the editor of *The Penguin Book of Spanish Civil War Verse*, 1980.

Stephen Daw is Director of the Birmingham School of Music.

Denola Deletant's *Colloquial Romanian* was published last year.

John Gillingham is senior lecturer in History at the London School of Economics.

David S. G. Goodman is a lecturer in Chinese Politics at the University of Newcastle.

John H. Harvey's *English Medieval Architects* will be republished shortly in a revised edition.

Joanna Hodge is a junior research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford.

Robert Irwin's *The Mamluk Sultanate 1250-1517* will be published later this year.

Emrys Jones is Reader in English Literature at the University of Oxford.

David Lyons's *Ethics and the Rule of Law* was published earlier this year.

Avshalom Margalit is Professor of Philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Gordon Marshall is a lecturer in Sociology at the University of Essex.

Brian Moeran's *A Country Diary: Portrait of a Japanese valley* will be published later this year.

Virgil Neumilana teaches Comparative Literature at the Catholic University of America, Washington.

Bernard O'Donoghue's collection of poems *Razorblades and Pencils* has recently been published.

D. D. R. Owen is the author of *The Legend of Roland: A pageant of the Middle Ages*, 1973.

Jessica Rawson is Deputy Keeper in the Department of Oriental Antiquities at the British Museum.

Paul Smith is Professor of Modern History at the University of Southampton.

J. I. M. Stewart's *A Villa in France* was published in 1982.

P. J. Vakkilala's *Arab and Regional Politics in the Middle East* will be published shortly.

Geza Vermes is Reader in Jewish Studies at the University of Oxford.

J. F. Watkins is Professor Emeritus of Medical Microbiology at the University of Wales.

John Weightman is the author of *The Concept of the Avant-Garde: Explorations in modernism*, 1973.

Stanley Weintraub is editing for publication Bernard Shaw's shorthand diaries.

Phyllis Willmott's autobiography, *The Green Girl*, was published last year.

Stuart Woolf is Professor of History at the European University Institute in Florence.

Back into the world

David S. G. Goodman

MICHAEL YAHUDA
Towards the End of Isolationism: China's foreign policy after Mao
279pp. Macmillan. £15 (paperback, £5.95). 0333275284

Since Mao Zedong died in 1976, it has not been only outside observers of the People's Republic of China who have sought to reassess the role of the former Chairman and his impact on China's development. The Chinese Communist Party itself has carried out a wide-ranging reevaluation of the country's history after 1949. That process reached a first culmination in the summer of 1981, when the central committee (of the Party) adopted a formal resolution on events after 1949. As is now well known, that resolution was *inter alia* extremely negative about several of Mao's activities and policy initiatives, not least of the decade of "Cultural Revolution" (1966-76) and Mao's role in its initiation.

However, this reassessment has left the area of foreign policy largely undiscussed, at least in public, which is remarkable for two reasons. The first is that during Mao's lifetime, China's foreign policy was very much his preserve, and for some time now the conventional wisdom has been that he was the major determinant of, and played the dominant role in, making it. The second reason is that in terms of economic and cultural relations with the rest of the world, China's foreign policy appears to have changed no less dramatically than its other policies since Mao's death. Thus, to take a simple indicator, China's foreign trade doubled between 1977 and 1981. Moreover, developments in foreign policy would seem to have been in directions which Mao might well not have favoured. For example, his notion of "self-reliance" is likely to have precluded any notion of foreign investment in China such as is now possible.

Michael Yahuda provides an explanation for the apparent paradox of a contemporary China which is generally prepared to criticize Mao Zedong explicitly, yet has done so only implicitly in the case of foreign policy. His major concern is to analyse the continuities and changes in that policy. To that end the book is divided into two: the first part considers Mao's legacy in foreign affairs; the second the evolution of foreign policy since 1976. As Yahuda's title suggests, he characterizes foreign policy during the past seven years in terms of China's greater involvement in world affairs. He does not argue that the isolation associated with the Cultural Revolution has gone for ever, but rather that, in both diplomacy and trade, China has moved towards closer integration into the world order.

However, there is a distinction to be made between the diplomatic and commercial components of her foreign policy, a distinction fundamental both to this volume and to understanding the lack of criticism of Mao's foreign policy. Yahuda distinguishes between what he calls the "societal" and "strategic" dimensions. The former are those concerns related to China's internal development, in particular the process of modernization. Such aspects of foreign policy are important, not least since Chinese leaders have long debated (and the debate precedes the establishment of the People's Republic by well over half a century) the extent to which China's modernization could or should be brought about through dependence on external sources. The "strategic" dimension is that more concerned with questions of national security. Though Yahuda acknowledges that the distinction is more analytical than real - and that they are interdependent - its usefulness is underlined throughout the book.

In particular, the distinction is able to demonstrate that even in the sphere of foreign policy-making, different types of decision are taken at different levels within the Chinese system. Thus, for example, though the strategic questions of war and alliances have been, and remain, the preserve of the handful of most important leaders, crucial decisions related to foreign trade may often have been made by municipal leaders or even enterprise managers. Moreover, the distinction enables

Yahuda to challenge the view of those who seek to argue that China's foreign policy has been determined by domestic developments. Far from finding support for that view, he suggests that the opposite is more likely to have been the case. China's options about which strategy to adopt for its socio-economic development have been severely limited by its patterns of international relations. Thus, the extreme advocacy of a strategy of "self-reliance" during the late 1960s can be seen as a function of its isolation from any aid or assistance.

Finally, the distinction between the two dimensions indicates the specific importance of Mao's contribution in that sphere. In Yahuda's view, Mao's legacy in questions of national security has remained largely unchallenged: his desire for national, and nationalist expression, on the part of "a large Third World country" which has often suffered from its "strategic adversity and inferiority". During his lifetime, Mao frequently tried to create coalitions in international politics, based on that weakness, against one or both "superpowers". None the less, behind it all lay the desire for the recognition of China internationally as itself a "great power". It is a measure of both Mao's success and the continuation of his legacy that since his death "the China Card" has come to play such an important role in international relations. As Yahuda readily acknowledges, China is unlikely to become a major world economic force in the near future; and in any case its importance to the two superpowers "ought to be much less than their importance to China". That the opposite often appears to be the case says at least as much about the nature of international politics as it does about China's leaders, both past and present.

The equilibrium trap

Jessica Rawson

CAROLINE BLUNDEN and MARK ELVIN
Cultural Atlas of China
237pp, with colour and black-and-white illustrations. Oxford: Phaidon. £17.50. 0714823090

The forty-five maps and large number of diagrams in *Cultural Atlas of China* convey vividly the scale of the country and the complexity of its political history. The authors, Caroline Blunden and Mark Elvin, rightly consider not just the ancient centres of China - "Inner China" as they term the area from Peking across the north China plain to the Yangtze valley and the southern coast - but also the vast tracts of Outer China, over which the Chinese have exerted dominion intermittently for centuries, the steppes of Mongolia, the deserts of Central Asia and the mountains of Tibet. Maps are used both to delineate the whole area and to pick out individual regions that had a crucial role at different times, the western regions in the Tang dynasty (AD 618-906) and Manchuria in the Qing (1368-1644).

Some of the maps and diagrams effectively draw attention to aspects of Chinese history that are easy to overlook in conventional descriptions. A map of Shang dynasty centres (c 1500-1100 BC) is used to relate sites at which Shang dynasty material has been excavated with places known from names given in Shang divination inscriptions. The excavated remains and the named sites barely impinge on one another, opening our eyes to Shang preoccupation with hunting and military expeditions in areas they do not seem to have controlled and in which they have left few tangible remains.

At almost the other end of the historical map of China and the Pacific in the Ming and Qing periods makes illuminating comparisons between the sea-routes known to the Chinese and those plied by the Europeans. It is the ironies of history that as the Europeans embarked on their voyages of discovery, trade, the Ming Emperor terminated the Chinese junks not just to south-east Asia, but further west to India, the coasts of Africa and the Persian Gulf.

The text is deliberately fractured. Peter an extensive introduction, three main chapters describe Chinese history and society, and a portion consists of brief essays on individual topics. Even the central historical section, subdivided, separating historical events from description of society and from some of individual aspects of material culture, the book intended for the non-specialist reader, the historical sections are very demanding. One would expect from his pioneering work *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*, Mark Elvin presents Chinese history and society in a series of major themes rather than as a series of rules and events. A certain familiarity with Chinese dynastic history is therefore desirable.

The intense economic development of Song period (AD 960-1279), which preceded Elvin in his earlier work, forms a theme in the present book. In *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*, he suggested that the reason why China failed to match the industrial development of Europe was to be found in the high level of Chinese achievement in agriculture, manufacture and transport, traditional technologies, which made profound invention more and more difficult - a term he termed the "high-level equilibrium trap". Elvin now seems to have moved away from that approach, suggesting instead that the differences between Europe and China are traced to the nature of the Chinese hierarchy and the examinations that were selected officials. The stifling effects of an over-ordered system are well illustrated in a passage by Wu Zhifeng written in the tenth century:

When the examination system is in operation everyone will be assured of an official post. But even so, it is by means of this that I will have students; and, when, everyone naturally no one will dare to do wrong things, thus an important bearing on the process of rule.

Alongside this challenging account of Chinese history and society, the *Cultural Atlas of China* is a book of Chinese material culture seen in its own time. The intricacies of Chinese bronzes, the extraordinary pottery and the first Qin Emperor and the effectiveness of Chinese ink painting are faithfully but not surveyed; the analytical approach is not evidence in the historical sections is not here. Yet the idiosyncrasies of Chinese casting and calligraphic painting present as intriguing as those of her economic and political history. For instance, ancient Chinese bronze casting made use of separate pieces moulds to an extent unknown in the parts of the ancient world, therefore demanding skill in working clay and resulting in the subdivision of labour. Bronze casting even in the Shang dynasty, was semi-industrialized. In the field of painting the reverse was the case. While European painters were working in large workshops with apprentices, the Chinese had developed theories of art and proclaimed the individual expressive quality of brush work, and painting had become an activity that the artist could not delegate to apprentices.

The most obvious shortcoming of the book is its description of Chinese ceramics. China the world in the manufacture of ceramics and in the invention of porcelain, were produced on a huge scale by the end of the period, and are a special case of the Chinese development so eloquently described by Elvin. Yet the two pages devoted to them are in the inkling of the exceptional qualities of Chinese ceramics, the size of the industries, the vast trade throughout the world that they supplied. Here indeed is an occasion for illustrating the routes of trade that Chinese ports to Asia, Europe and the World.

Rebuilding the architecture

Bernard O'Donoghue

HELEN COOPER
The Structure of The Canterbury Tales
256pp. Duckworth. £24 (paperback, £7.95). 0715617184
A.J. MINNIS
Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity
200pp. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer. £19.50.
0859910989
DAVID BURNLEY
A Guide to Chaucer's Language
264pp. Macmillan. £15 (paperback, £4.95). 0 333 33431 7
JAMES I. WIMSATT
Chaucer and the Poems of 'Ch' in University of Pennsylvania MS French 15
136pp. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer. £19.50.
0 85991 130 6

The range of the subjects suggested by the titles of these books immediately evokes an old problem in approaching Chaucer: can he be read with a glossary like any later English poet, or must some scholarly apparatus be gathered in preparation? And if so, how much? Can criticism carry on regardless, while the "editors, paleographers, philologists and lexicographers" along with "historians of medieval thought and society" (listed in the heavy-hearted conclusion of J.A. Burrow's *Medieval Writers and Their Work*) perform their ministry? The context being rebuilt by this labour force is what David Burnley calls the "architecture" of Chaucer. Of this group of books, Helen Cooper's *The Structure of the Canterbury Tales*, proceeds straight to criticism and description of a traditional kind while the other three work at the architecture.

Dr Cooper keeps away, as much as possible, from previous structure-building critics, such as D.W. Robertson in *A Preface to Chaucer* and Ralph Baldwin in *The Unity of The Canterbury Tales* and she argues against any uniform view of the poem. The only overall structure she will admit is the Menippean Satire, or Anatomy, the most loosely connected of literary forms (in a sense, then, her title is rather surprising). And, if the *Tales* are Chaucer's *Summa*, as she says, the title she might confer on their compiler could be (to borrow Colin Hardie's felicitous styling of Tolkien) *doctor fabulosus*. From the outset she makes it clear that she is going to concentrate on Chaucer as the writer of "some of the finest stories ever produced", giving less prominence to the *Canterbury Pilgrimage* as a biographical, topographical or spiritual progress. She gives an informative brief history of the genre of story-collection up to Chaucer's time, and then a short summary of the well-worked matter of the order of the groups of tales. Next she outlines her view of the work as an encyclopaedia of narrative kinds, and then looks at *The Knight's Tale* which she sees as initiating many of the themes and problems considered in the *Tales* as a whole.

There follows a long chapter (taking up nearly half the book) making a detailed analysis of the groups themselves and the relationships of the tales within them. In the preface, Cooper says that this is the kind of book she had always wanted to read about the *Tales* and had never found. Such a proposition initially seems surprising in a book that looked like a Reader's Guide to *The Canterbury Tales*, not characterized by any identifiable novelty of approach, but it finds its justification in this fine chapter. It is a curious fact that the thematic relations within the groups had never been considered as an end in themselves in a full-length book (though more concession might have been made to Donald R. Howard's chapter "A Theory of Structure" in *The Idea of the Canterbury Tales*). Perhaps this neglect is because the most familiar grouping is still the infamous "Marriage Group" which cuts across three of Chaucer's original divisions, obscuring their internal links which Cooper concentrates on in such a rewarding way. She shows how the tales of Group III (beginning with *The Wife of Bath*); though generically so distinct, all centre on the idea of contractual obligation; the tales of the Second Nun and the Canon's Yeoman are antithetical descriptions on the roads to

Heaven and Hell; and so on. This aspect of the *Tales* deserves the prominence Cooper gives to it, since, as she says, the placing is surely Chaucer's own, whereas the ordering of the groups as a whole is more conjectural and incomplete.

Cooper's critical judgments on the *Tales* are also very persuasive. Perhaps her humane and indignant support for the Clerk's Griselda against her treatment in the story sounds anachronistic: "virtue must serve an apparently wicked cause". The typological reading of critics such as Robertson, which Cooper resolutely debars, seems preferable here. But any reservations fade before her admirable reading of Group VII which she interprets as a "debate on literature, its methods and functions and status". She returns obsessively, and rightly, to *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, which she sees as a model of the *Tales* as a whole in its employment of tales within tales and its consequent blurring of moral judgment. Her analysis of the *mise-en-scène* effect here ("the meaning of these successive tales becomes less clear as they move onwards") is itself an accomplished critical miniature. And she places *The Parson's Tale* well as a rhetorically appropriate end which is not necessarily the conclusive perspective of the poem (a point to which it might be added that the presence of the *Retractions* does not mean that Chaucer had finished with the work: merely that he had written the rhetorically predictable last part, which need not be the last section written).

The encyclopaedia of genres is the warp of Cooper's book, and her woof is the thematic resurfacing of large questions first raised in *The Knight's Tale*: Providence and unjust suffering, true and false felicity, and so on. These philosophical questions remain of the nature of *demandes d'amour*, unanswerable quandaries, for Chaucer's protagonists; Chaucer's readers are in a much better position to understand them after reading A. J. Minnis's hugely enlightening book, *Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity*. Looking at Chaucer's two most substantial classical works, *The Knight's Tale* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, Dr Minnis presents the view of paganism they enshrine in a way that solves major problems. The modern scholar has to decide how to distinguish the classical past from Chaucer's view of it, and how to assess the accuracy (or even intended accuracy) of the latter. Minnis argues that Chaucer, as a "historical poet" (C.S. Lewis's term for a poet of verisimilitude, not of exemplary history), presents the pagans with great historical fidelity according to the views of his time. More importantly, he shows how some of the characteristics of Chaucer's figures must be understood not in psychological terms but as indices of their historical beliefs. By showing how fourteenth-century writers (Bersuire, Trevel, Holcot, Bradwardine) saw the past, he makes better sense of *Troilus* and the Knight's Emelye (neither of them typical courtly love personae, but figures of quietist determinism), and of Criseyde "the ferulest wight" (since fear was the besetting limitation of the pagans, understandably in view of their theological uncertainty and the wilful perversity of their gods who were "swich rascalles"). Chaucer's view of the pagan past was a liberal one, in line with that of the Nominalist thinkers of his century and of Langland's Ymaginatif; accordingly he elevates Boccaccio's Teseo to a Jupiter-linked figure of philosophical wisdom, "the closest Chaucer ever got to portraying a hero".

This last point indicates the way in which Minnis solves another problem, a more pressing one still: how do we know, in derivative works like *The Knight's Tale* and *Troilus*, what is Chaucer and what is source or tradition? A glib initial answer is: read Minnis's book. Chaucer's sympathetic presentation of paganism, drawing on enlightened contemporaries, enables him to distance himself clearly from his characters (they fail to understand that predetermining necessity is conditional, not absolute) while presenting them positively; and Minnis shows that this clear distinction, as a technique of characterization, is new in Chaucer. The endings of the two works, both great critical quandaries, are no longer so problematic: a perfect example of "architecture" serving criticism.

David Burnley's *A Guide to Chaucer's Language* is useful in the same way. Within its

modest scope, it couldn't be a full account of Chaucer's language (such a thing does not yet exist) but, as its title suggests, it is a "guide" through the places where the reader might go wrong by analogy with modern English. The early chapters are a useful brief conspectus of grammar, containing, for example, excellent explanations of Aspect, and of how varying past tenses and the negative are used to express distinctions of meaning. In the second part, Burnley returns to the methods of his acclaimed earlier book *Chaucer's Language and the Philosophers' Tradition*, to look at the scope and register of the poet's usage. He identifies two principles: one is that the meaning of a term in Chaucer's language is often to be explained by reference to the level of its context to a degree greater than in modern English; the other that there is much formal variation in Chaucer's grammar. The poet's language has long been regarded as various and transitional in this way; while the possibility that a particular variant may be scribal always has to be borne in mind (and some of Burnley's illustrations of the variations even between the best manuscripts, such as Ellesmere and Hengwrt, are a forceful reminder of this), it is abundantly clear from the evidence here that Chaucer employs variation in dialect and register for flexibility of metre and meaning.

The French element in the language necessarily plays a large part in Burnley's discussion, particularly in the later, lexically-based parts. It is curious that no French poems written by Chaucer are known to survive (as they are from his contemporary Gower), especially in view of the French forms of the stanzas of his English poems and the French models that his elegant short lyrics follow. James I. Wimsatt has edited a curiosity that bears on this: the fifteen poems,

out of the 310 lyrics in the University of Pennsylvania MS French 15, which have the letters "Ch" written by them as if to identify the author. Many of the poems in the manuscript are certainly attributable: there are 107 by Machaut, 27 by Granson and at least one by Deschamps. Professor Wimsatt believes that the fifteen poems are probably not by Chaucer, partly because the stanza-forms of most of them are of a kind never used by him, while other lyrics in the collection are in rhyme royal or the *Monk's Tale* stanza, both borrowed by Chaucer from French. The poems are finely edited, with lucid facing translations, but the book's major interest and distinction lie in the series of appended descriptions of the manuscripts' contents and their relations. The editor (who has the highest authority in this area) says that this manuscript is the best collection of French fourteenth-century lyrics, and that it may have been compiled in England by Granson himself (who died in a duel in 1397). Some of the "Ch" poems have merit in their own right and they are, as Wimsatt says, of immense importance in suggesting the kind of French poetic milieu in which Chaucer as a young courtier would have been versed.

Chaucer criticism used to be said to be impoverished, but its development on scholarly and critical fronts is now advancing away from both the bluff reductionism of the Chaucerian "good old Chaucer" school and the more stultifying excesses of the exegetes. Some methodological uncertainties still remain, as when Minnis muses about what kind of Hirschian structuralist he is and what kind of jargonist he isn't. But the evidence is that the Chaucer industry is thriving, and the architecture is working towards a point at which critical pronouncement can become definitive.

Soap opera pagans

D. D. R. Owen

NORMAN DANIEL
Heroes and Saracens: A reinterpretation of the Chansons de Geste
349pp. Edinburgh University Press. £15. 0852244304

Sketchy and unreliable though their knowledge of Islam may have been, some medieval theologians did try to examine and refute in the name of Christianity the tenets of the rival religion. Having, in his earlier *Islam and the West*, surveyed their "official" view, Norman Daniel decided to complement this by searching out the "unofficial" Western attitude to Muslims, commonly dubbed Saracens, which he thought likely to be best reflected in the popular *chansons de geste*, where they so often appear ranged against the Christian heroes.

Dr Daniel claims no special qualifications for the task other than his conversance with the Islamic world: untrained in literary criticism or history, he gives scholarly debate on the genre as wide a berth as possible, while hoping to "usefully supplement, certainly not compete with, the literary specialists and the social historians". We are invited, then, to accept him as an enthusiastic amateur. And what enthusiasm! Whirling us along through a wide range of texts, he gives us no time to catch our breath until his last example is cited, his final conclusion drawn. Fascinated by the wealth of illustration and captured by the engaging informality of his style, we forgive and quickly forget the odd flaw we notice - an occasional mis-translation or faulty reference, even the curious discrepancy between the sub-titles shown on the jacket and in the book ("interpretation" or "re-interpretation"? Perhaps neither, but no matter).

Like an explorer giving a slide-show on his return from exotic parts, Daniel projects for us image upon image of Saracens in all their activities: warring, gaining, love-making, worshiping, and reviling their gods, disputing with Christians and, not infrequently (especially when female and beautiful), being converted. But this is more than lively travelogue; since all the time we are being led towards conclusions regarding the character, not merely of the pagans and their religion but also of the genre itself.

Chivalry as exercised by them is shown to be patterned in its essentials on that of the Christians, from whom they are scarcely to be distinguished in terms of behaviour or moral calibre: it is only their false religion that sets them apart. Yet this is a religion that never was: not a simple travesty of Islam, but a total substitution for it. Its chief feature is what Daniel calls the "Tervagant convention", the cult of a pantheon of characterless and futile gods practised through idolatry. The poets had no interest in learning any of the basic facts from the theologians. Their concern was to create their own fantasy religion, not for polemical purposes, but to spice their tales of derring-do and epic conflict and even prompt a laugh or two at the Saracens' expense.

Having previously supposed the *chansons de geste* to be a vehicle for Crusade propaganda, Daniel has now come to see them as creating a closed and self-sufficient and wholly imaginary little world", where their public, like the devotees of P.G. Wodehouse or Tolkien or Dr Who, can gain temporary refuge from reality. Intent only on "patching up an evening's entertainment", the poets were true predecessors of the modern deniers in soap operas, science fiction, comic strips or westerns.

It was perhaps inevitable that the fragmented approach should lead to this conclusion. Yet to experience any of the finer *chansons de geste* as a whole is to feel there a power and earnestness that goes deeper than mere entertainment value. The most obvious example is the *Roland* which, unique though it is, did set the tone for many later works. No idle diversion that, but a moving celebration of a heroic past. Its rousing qualities vouched for by the early tradition that it was sung before the Norman troops at Hastings to inspire them to battle - an eleventh-century *Marsellaise*, with the English and their "sang impur" equated with the Saracens in Roncevaux.

In his brief survey of works other than *chansons de geste*, Daniel might have spared a glance for the *Jeit de Saint Nicolas* by Jean Bodel, himself an epic poet. For in that play he would have found ample support for his thesis that pure fantasy predominates in the depiction of the pagans. There one enjoys a rich fund of entertainment while appreciating the serious underlying theme. The same could be said of Dr Daniel's book.

Wood Ship, Iron Ship

- I
The wooden ships, the horses of tree,
The wooden cavalry, riding the ocean.
- II
The ships of polished steel, the warships,
The ships of thunder and lightning,
The steeds of steel, like living
Inside a chace of bells.
- III
And the horses of air stamping the ocean and snorting
- IV
And marking the forest with its gliding hulls;
Salute the creatrix of the British Navy,
Our patron, oak-hued planter Squirrel.
- V
And the mysteries of smelting,
The black metal and the red metal
Brought out of the smoke of mines
Transmuted from black metal to white metal
And the thing of light gliding over the mines of night sea.
- VI
The nests of gulls continually offer themselves,
The white books with open pages gliding over the water,
Open at the page that tells us how to lift over water,
How to lift on the breath shared by all.
- VII
We learn to breathe big-chested
On the steel decks of our cruisers taking the air,
And dream of our wings
Climbing the world-tree of the air;
Its invisible forestry and fruits
Which are food of the lungs, its superb
White willow of the high cloud
Shining in the sun like floating metal.
- VIII
Over the feathered sea diving into its gulfs
Floating its heaviest metal, its flying stone.

PETER REDGROVE

Fragments large and small

John Gillingham

F. R. H. Du BOULAY
Germany in the Later Middle Ages
260pp. Athlone Press. £18 (paperback, £6.95).
0-485 112205

In the mid nineteenth century, when Lord Bryce wrote his famous essay on the Holy Roman Empire, he pondered on the feelings of an Englishman taking a train through Central Germany, and "amused to find, every hour or two, by the change in . . . the colour of the stripes on the railway fences, that he had passed out of one and into another of its miniature kingdoms". A century earlier, commented Bryce, the still greater number of petty principalities would have left the traveller even "more surprised and embarrassed". These are revealing phrases which make plain the two great problems still facing anyone who tries to write a history of Germany in the later Middle Ages.

First there is the problem of organization. In F. R. H. Du Boulay's period, roughly 1350 to 1500, there were *deutsche Lande* but hardly a *Deutschland*. Instead there were over a hundred territories ruled by dukes, margraves and counts, nearly as many ruled by archbishops, bishops and abbots, and some sixty more or less autonomous urban republics, not to mention well over a thousand *Reichsstädte*, lesser nobles who recognized no overlord except the king—whose title was not king of Germany but "king of the Romans". How can anyone hope to write a coherent and manageable history of what Du Boulay has aptly called "a sea of political fragments in which some larger fragments floated"?

To a quite remarkable degree Du Boulay has succeeded in overcoming this difficulty. It would be easy to find things to criticize in this book, not at all easy to suggest a more satisfactory overall structure. In the opening chapter on "Language and Mental Communication" he states his main theme: "the growing consciousness of German identity in language and political awareness". Subsequent chapters place the theme in its political, economic, social, cultural and religious context. The long chapter on towns (roughly a quarter of the whole) is particularly good, but no aspect of life is left

untouched. To attempt all this in a mere 219 pages of text—the author himself, in a Benedictine phrase, refers to his "little book"—is to combine modesty with daring. In the circumstances Du Boulay's approach has to be an impressionistic one but equally this means that the book is full of vivid touches: the dying knight, William of Henneberg, grasping the pious candle thrust into his hand as though it were the lance he had wielded all his life; Frederick III—a king treated by Du Boulay with unusual sympathy—wryly remarking that the Roman Empire now moved on one leg only (he had recently had a foot amputated); the Philosophical Faculty of Leipzig University buying shares in a mining firm; the peasants caricatured in a Nuremberg Carnival play, asserting their qualifications for entry into citizenship on the basis of their deeds of sexual prowess. In the end we gain an impression of a society fascinating in its richness and diversity.

The second problem is one of interpretation. To the surprise and embarrassment felt by Bryce's Englishman, later events have added feelings of a very different kind. Whereas most Englishmen still regard the history of their own country, with barely concealed satisfaction, as something that went well, German history is seen as something that went wrong. Du Boulay belongs to this school of thought: the second theme of his book is political failure, in particular the failure of kingship. "The ultimate failure of towns and nobility to co-operate and the king to overmaster their private wills led to the failure of the Peace movement and the dislocation of German politics till the day of Prussian hegemony and of the National Socialist *Gleichschaltung* of 1933." To require the men and women of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Germany to share responsibility for events five hundred years later is perhaps a little excessive. But are historians being much more reasonable when they point to the ineffectiveness of royal authority in the later Middle Ages and infer from this that Germany was already in a bad way? It seems entirely plausible that a highly fragmented political system, with its numerous and often shifting internal frontiers and its conflicting demands on men's allegiance, should be more violence-prone than other contemporary societies—England is the

standard example—where the crown was stronger.

Thus for most historians the prevalence of local conflict is the determining feature of German society. Towns were numerous partly because they had walls to keep at bay "the terrors of plundering attack". Yet even within the walls peace was fragile, undermined by riots and by "a spate of town risings" provoked by the exclusive nature of the urban patriciate. The feud was respectable and violence accepted as normal. Ecclesiastical canons published in 1377 and 1423 laid down that clergy without temporal domains must not engage in war nor challenge anyone to fight unless it was in the interest of their church and with the permission of their superiors.

Yet the fact that violent action, or at least the threat of it, was more respectable in Germany than in England or France is not quite the same thing as saying that there was more violence. Levels of violence are notoriously hard to measure; contemporary opinion on this subject is always—even in fifteenth-century Germany—unreliable. In later medieval Germany the traditional royal tasks of peace-keeping and the provision of justice were also being

carried out by other institutions—primarily courts, urban republics, leagues of knights and even one notorious secret society, the *Yema*, whose hooded judges have long exercised the imaginations of creative writers. But did these "crown substitutes" succeed in checking violence? Or did the proliferation of competing jurisdictions tend rather to inflame the situation? Historians brought up in a monarchical tradition tend to assume the latter, but it is not easy to prove. And there are some matters which give pause for thought. The cultural achievement of the politically fragmented countries is striking. Nor was it just a cultural achievement: the fact that printers were businessmen who had to sell and distribute their goods might also suggest that there were societies with a relatively high level of prosperity and peace.

In writing of later medieval Germany Professor Du Boulay not only fills one of the gaps most keenly felt by students of medieval history and their teachers, but also, by adopting the instinctively comparative approach of a scholar already well known for his work on later medieval England, he does so in a manner which is splendidly thought-provoking.

Alpine absolutist

Stuart Woolf

GEOFFREY SYMCOX
Victor Amadeus II: Absolutism in the Savoyard state 1675–1730
272pp. Thames and Hudson. £17.50.
0 500 87010 1

Frederick the Great of Prussia and Victor Amadeus II of Savoy left an indelible imprint on their respective states, transforming them into such efficient military machines that they broke into the hallowed circle of great powers and extracted substantial territorial compensation. But while Frederick is a name recognized by every schoolboy, who knows that of Victor Amadeus?

Yet the achievements of this tenacious, ruthless and efficient autocrat were arguably as remarkable as those of his Prussian peers. The small, territorially divided state he inherited in 1675 had only survived, a century earlier, through the fortunate chance that his predecessor, Emanuel Filibert, had fought on the winning side. Throughout the seventeenth century, the rulers of this Alpine state were clients of the kings of France, with their dynastic possessions of Savoy and Nice subject to occupation in every war and a French garrison installed at Pinerolo in the heartland of Piedmont. The Savoyard state could have disappeared during Louis XIV's wars as easily as the duchy of Lorraine. In this excellent biography, Geoffrey Symcox explains clearly the dangers for small states of the dynastic *Realpolitik* of the *ancien régime*, and just how close to extinction Piedmont-Savoy came, as Victor Amadeus gambled its survival in the coalition wars against Louis XIV in his bid to achieve independence from France. Professor Symcox argues convincingly that the desperate siege of Turin in 1706 (whose iconographic tradition in Italy is probably second only to that of the 1870 breach of Porta Pia) marked a turning-point in the War of the Spanish Succession and justified England's support for Victor Amadeus's elevation to the crown of Sicily at the Treaty of Utrecht. That he should have been forced to exchange Sicily for the poorer and less prestigious island of Sardinia within six years demonstrates the limits of the sovereignty of this small state, which was only to emerge as the most powerful of the independent Italian states a century later at the Congress of Vienna, once more through English patronage.

If Victor Amadeus II's achievements consisted merely of his unscrupulous manoeuvres on the international scene, he would hardly merit a major biography. What makes him significant was his creation of a remarkably successful absolutist state. Symcox argues the case that Victor Amadeus's reforms provide a definitive illustration of the methods and objectives of absolutism at work. The small size of the state he ruled makes it a perfect "laboratory" specimen of absolutism than larger states like France. Symcox is to be congratulated on writing a truly modern biography, in which the subject of the study is used as a key to the broad range of problems of the age in which he lived and acted. This study is based on extended original research in the archives; it is a work of synthesis, although, as Symcox properly notes, it differs from the attempt to deal with Victor Amadeus's histories as a single whole.

As Symcox stresses, Victor Amadeus was building on a Savoyard tradition of bureaucratic centralization and institutional development that went back to Emanuel Filibert. Unlike the kings of France, this first Savoyard king was not checked in his activities by the presence of a bloated bureaucracy or by the institutionalized sale of offices. Whether the immense cost of the wars, or worry that the transalpine duchy of Savoy was becoming affected, constituted the main motive for his reforms, which reached a new intensity after 1715, Victor Amadeus was determined to subordinate society to the militaristic state machine. Thus the privileges of both nobility and Church were attacked with the same vigour as local and regional autonomies, fiscal inequality was diminished by the successful completion of the first systematic cadastre in an absolutist state, intendants were established throughout the realm but kept on a far tighter rein than their French equivalents, manufacturing activities were promoted in true mercantilist fashion. The parallels with France, where militarization is concerned, with Prussia

ger states like France. Symcox is to be congratulated on writing a truly modern biography, in which the subject of the study is used as a key to the broad range of problems of the age in which he lived and acted. This study is based on extended original research in the archives; it is a work of synthesis, although, as Symcox properly notes, it differs from the attempt to deal with Victor Amadeus's histories as a single whole.

As Symcox stresses, Victor Amadeus was building on a Savoyard tradition of bureaucratic centralization and institutional development that went back to Emanuel Filibert. Unlike the kings of France, this first Savoyard king was not checked in his activities by the presence of a bloated bureaucracy or by the institutionalized sale of offices. Whether the immense cost of the wars, or worry that the transalpine duchy of Savoy was becoming affected, constituted the main motive for his reforms, which reached a new intensity after 1715, Victor Amadeus was determined to subordinate society to the militaristic state machine. Thus the privileges of both nobility and Church were attacked with the same vigour as local and regional autonomies, fiscal inequality was diminished by the successful completion of the first systematic cadastre in an absolutist state, intendants were established throughout the realm but kept on a far tighter rein than their French equivalents, manufacturing activities were promoted in true mercantilist fashion. The parallels with France, where militarization is concerned, with Prussia

The limits to Victor Amadeus's reforming zeal are also noted: the social order, with its aristocratic ethic, was to remain untouched; conflict with the Church was never allowed to accommodate theological debates, nor, in fact, nor to encourage toleration towards Waldesi and Jews; intellectual enquiry was heavily repressed. In practice Victor Amadeus's vision never extended beyond the state machine. Symcox argues that underlying the entire half-century of reforms was a drive to create a unified state out of the disparate regions by bringing down their traditional autonomies (even though, in the end, the valley of Aosta was left relatively untouched). But if this were so, Victor Amadeus's sense of state conflicted with his equally strong sense of dynasty, which made him ready to exchange the regions he had shaped, even Piedmont, for the more prestigious kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. Here too, in the paradoxical coexistence of an ideology of state-building and a dynastic indifference to territorial patriotism, Victor Amadeus II was typical of absolutism. Unlike the king of France, the rulers of the Savoyard state avoided losing control through bankruptcy, but like the Hohenzollerns of Prussia, they stamped their militarist orthodoxy so heavily on society that, once their army was defeated by the French Revolutionary armies, there was nothing left to support the state.

Breaking through

Colin Greenland

WALTER TEVIS
The Steps of the Sun
251pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0575 03367 3
GARRY KILWORTH
A Theatre of Timesmiths
185pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0575 03411 4
KEITH ROBERTS
Pavane
279pp. Gollancz. £8.95.
0575 03437 8

There is something familiar about Walter Tevis's latest protagonist, as he confesses himself to an imaginary policeman. "Look here, Officer, my name is Ben Belson, the celebrated millionaire financier, friend to famous and beautiful women, theater buff, prowler of the galaxy and closet Marxist. Big hands, big feet, big prick and a booming voice. And a big, throbbing, empty hole in my heart." We recognize the type. Perhaps we have met him before, in other self-reflecting American novels of the last ten years: male, Caucasian, educated, fifty. Formerly idealistic, he is now alcoholic and impotent, numb with guilt and glumly cynical. He is the symbol of a disillusioned generation. Belson's home is an exhausted America of eighty years hence, but his despair is contemporary enough: even in success, his country has let him down.

"For twenty years something in my soul has been on hold, waiting, going through the motions of having a filled and good life but inside feeling morose and sullen." Like a Renaissance merchant staking his all on a passage to the Indies, Belson goes looking for uranium. He buys a disused Chinese spaceship, refits the captain's stateroom with antiques and the bridge with beige carpet and consoles ("nothing more complicated than a locomotive"), and blasts off, illegally, into the existential void.

His luck is phenomenal. He finds a planet, bleak beyond compare, but apparently sentient, and wholly benevolent. He calls it Belson. Here he develops a morphine habit. A second world obligingly provides his hill of 86 per cent uranyl nitrate, an unstable but not radioactive isotope. Posting a shipful back to Earth, he decides to return to Belson as a hermit. He meditates upon his past inadequacies as husband, father and lover. When acid rain destroys his supplies, the planet mothers him. Its only shrub yields a perfect analgesic; its grass gives massage and blood-transfusions.

As laconic space-extravaganza, *The Steps of the Sun* is not so far from *The Shores of Titan*; but where Kurt Vonnegut's quaint universe symbolizes nothing but its own absurdity, Ben Belson's wanderings, like more traditional oracles, gather meaning to his hollow soul. His mercantile expedition turns into a pilgrimage through a cosmos that is quiet and kind. It is the shrunken, suspicious Earth that is hostile, as Belson finds out when arrested after touching down in Washington. His exile continues, in captivity and on the run through a purgatorial United States in love with its own poverty, to a cold utopian China. Belson, with his cargo of pain-killers and safe uranium, can save both East and West, but only if he can save himself first.

The Steps of the Sun has direct connections with some of the stories in Tevis's collection *Far From Home*, published in this country last year by Gollancz. "The Apotheosis of Myra", set on Belson (now Belain) some years later, makes reference to "that old marauding tycoon" who discovered the planet (but, oddly, not the plant). The Oedipal encounters of Barney with his revenant parents in "A Visit from Mother" and "Daddy" prefigure Ben Belson's Freudian turmoil. Inexplicably, characters recur: Myra, a neglected wife or daughter who collects Haviland china; a Scottish lover called Isabel, forty-three years old and working in the arts. These correspondences illuminate nothing but suggest that Tevis is working out private preoccupations in his fiction. After the shallow and derivative *Mockingbird*, *The Steps of the Sun* seems to represent a personal breakthrough. Perhaps this is why Belson's chronicle is thoroughly selfish yet entirely sympathetic, and the full text.

deeply depressed yet ultimately uplifting.

First City is a hexagonal pile of featureless stone buildings with a central tower of green obsidian which houses a senescent, semi-organic computer, the Primary. The whole is enclosed in a gigantic cone of ice. It sounds absurd to describe the bizarre location of *A Theatre of Timesmiths* as familiar territory, yet so it is, and readers of science fiction will recognize it at once.

Science fiction draws on a very large and heterogeneous reservoir of shared assumptions, images and themes: large enough for the narrative permutations to connote infinity. The enclosed city, re-imagined by countless authors, is a crucial symbol. It represents a static, bounded state of mind—literally frozen, in Garry Kilworth's version—which must be disrupted and transcended for the progress of life and, more importantly, understanding to go forward. Peter Nicholls, in an entry in the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, identified the theme as "Conceptual Breakthrough".

A Theatre of Timesmiths describes just such a breakthrough. Most of the citizens await a Messiah to lead them from captivity. A few more impulsive spirits are killed every week trying to scale the inside of the ice-mountain, or to fly out of the hole in the top in primitive balloons. Others, like Ben Blakely, stay on the ground and foment revolution, focusing their resentment on the police who suppress escape attempts, or on the unknown curators of the Primary who hold the only keys to the Green Tower. "WHO ARE THE SIX?" demand the graffiti. "WHY DO THEY KEEP US IN IGNORANCE?" It soon becomes obvious that the ice is not there to be ingeniously explained, but to be breached, by sustained heroic effort. As Nicholls observed, "If never reveals its romantic origins more clearly than when it uses the tropes of conceptual breakthrough."

Vestigial myths and snatches of old rhymes which Kilworth tantalizingly inserts into the culture of First City seem to demonstrate that it lies in our future. The "timesmiths" of the title are gifted telepaths who make their living by offering clients dreams which stretch and bend subjective time. The dreams give access to quite different landscapes. Do they exist only in memory, or is there a world outside? If this is First City, what and where are the others? Kilworth's protagonist, Morag MacKenzie, is a kind of minor timesmith, a telepathic prostitute who sells psychic rather than sexual intercourse. Through her rise to political eminence and her uncomfortable developing relationship with Ben Blakely, Kilworth reformulates and re-examines these mysteries. His romanticism is irreducible, constructed as a nesting series of revelations which only introduce new and larger enigmas. MacKenzie's intellectual quest has the dramatic urgency proper to an escape story, but presupposes an audience who will not be satisfied unless assured there is no final answer. At the same time, Kilworth is particular over his incidental explanations: the dimensions of the cone in kilometres; the catering arrangements of First City; the shape and construction of the canopy that protects it from "fallbergs". As usual, he seems to be addressing a reader in adolescence, the age at which the need to know and the desire to know that *nobody* knows are equally imperative.

Keith Roberts's *Pavane* expresses the same belief in inevitable but inconclusive change by endorsing a theory of cyclic history. In this imaginary Britain, the assassination of Elizabeth I and the victory of the Spanish Armada initiated four centuries of Catholic rule. The Church has tried to break the wheel. Papal encyclicals and inquisitions have forbidden all but a few scientific and technological innovations. The peasants work in wind mills and drive traction engines; their feudal masters make daguerreotypes and ride in steam Bentleys. Vividly and vigorously written, six linked stories of representative individuals chart the accumulating momentum of the insurrection. Mystical nationalism joins with intellectual heresy to force the glorious, painful breakthrough. There will be the cinematograph, and also the machine gun. *Pavane* is one of the very best novels of such an acknowledged classic that it comes as a surprise to realize that Gollancz's new edition is the first British publication of the full text.

Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

JOHN RHODE, ANTHONY BERKELEY,
GLADYS MITCHELL, and others
Ask a Policeman
311pp. Macmillan. £7.50.
0333 35337 4

Connoisseurs of detective stories of the 1930s, and historians of detective fiction in general, already owe a large debt to Macmillan for publishing *The Floating Admiral*, a collective work written by members of the Detection Club. The debt has now been increased by the appearance of *Ask a Policeman*, another in the same genre. This time the problem is set by John Rhode: Lord Comstock, an unpleasant newspaper tycoon, is found murdered in the study of his country house, Hursley Lodge (see map provided). That morning he has been visited by the Government Chief Whip, an Archbishop, and the Assistant Commissioner at Scotland Yard. Whether any of these committed the crime is ruminated on by Anthony Berkeley, Gladys Mitchell, Helen Simpson and Dorothy L. Sayers. Only—and here a touch of genius enters—each writer makes use of another's detective. Sayers and Berkeley exchange Wimsey and Sheringham; Mitchell and Simpson Mrs Bradley and Sir John Summerson. A final chapter by Milward Kennedy offers what might be a definitive treatment. It's an amusing collection: the ingenuity of all the participants is immense, with each solution as convincing as the previous one. And in Anthony Berkeley's hands Wimsey becomes almost a plausible man-about-town.

PETER TURNBULL
Big Money
173pp. Collins. £6.95.
000231387 1

Peter Turnbull's latest story of the Glasgow police begins one October morning when six gunmen lift a quarter of a million pounds in cash, untraceable books from a post-office in the city. A tough, solid book that takes the lid off the Glasgow underworld and reveals some more than nasty things going on in the depths.

EVELYN HERVEY
The Governess
199pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £7.95.
0297 74619 6

It is 1870; Harriet Unwin, recently taken on as a governess in the London house of Mr William Thackerton, sole proprietor of the firm of Thackerton's Patent Steam-Moulded Hats, is accused of the murder of her employer: she has to use her own wit and intelligence to escape the accusation and find the real criminal. A professional piece of work, with a pleasingly understated period background, neat plot, and intriguing heroine. But overall a slightly thin mixture.

COLIN DUNNE
Retrieval
192pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.95.
0436 13955 3

Hero-narrator Pete, ex-SAS, now working in intelligence, is one of a team recruited to carry out a snatch job over the East German frontier. One of his mates gets into bad trouble when he accidentally leaks details of the operation, and Pete sets out to avenge him. Good and intriguing beginning, with chilly nastiness set in a convincingly ordinary setting; details remain excellent, but plotwise the author ups the stakes too far, and credibility flies out of the window.

ANTHONY PRICE
Gunner Kelly
219pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0575 03353 X

As solid professional and gifted amateur, Colonel Butler and Dr Audley, Anthony Price's two men in British intelligence, naturally do not always see eye to eye. But that's a far cry from actually spying on one another, as happens here when Butler sends Captain Benedict Schneider of West German Intelligence off to the West Country to see what Audley's up to in the tightly feudal little village of Dunlisbury Royal. Another beautifully put together thriller.

ler, with an interesting new hero, a couple of cheerfully irreverent schoolboys with a taste for Latin, and the customary intricate plot. Anthony Price's ability to cram an immense amount of action and thought into a very short space of time has never been more noticeable than here: in *Gunner Kelly* the reader moves through the narrative only marginally faster than the characters.

JOHN BREEN
Vicar's Roses
173pp. Macmillan. £6.95.
0333 35986 0

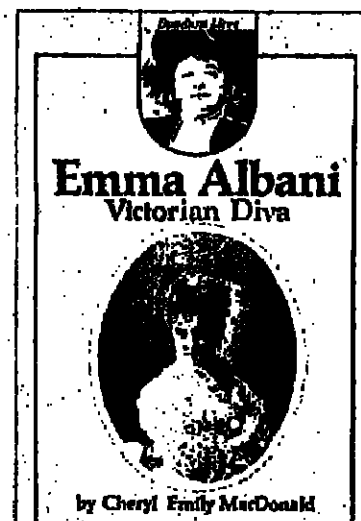
Well-known, but far from well-liked Californian jockey is shot while astride the bronze statue of a famous former mount. The crime is investigated by, among others, an overweight radio race commentator, his bouncy drama director girlfriend, his elderly aunt (a detective story buff from way back), a con artist and his private eye colleague. The police trail some twenty lengths back. An over-stuffed sandwich of a book: amusing, but with too many characters for the plot to support.

JONATHAN GASH
The Gondola Scam
240pp. Collins. £6.95.
000231374 X

The Gondola Scam is Jonathan Gash's eighth novel about Lovejoy, that scruffy, sex-obsessed East Anglian antique dealer, who believes that "nicking antiques lifts the lowest spirits". The book takes him, as might be expected, to Venice, where his infallible instinct for distinguishing between the genuine and the fake is coerced into the service of as unsavoury a bunch of crooks as one is likely to meet this side of the Rialto. Like all the Lovejoy stories, *The Gondola Scam* fizzles with energy, throwing off a continual stream of information on recognizing, forging, buying, selling or just stealing antiques. Intrigue a trifle broken-backed, but it would be ungrateful to complain.

Emma Albani

Victorian Diva



by Cheryl Emily MacDonald

A new biography of this world celebrated soprano who premiered a number of operas and oratorios, sang at Victoria's funeral and Edward VII's coronation, and married the manager/owner of Covent Garden.

As George Bernard Shaw said of Albani in 1898, fans were "standing two or three deep behind the chairs . . . prima donna worshippers who are bent on obtaining a bird's eye view of Madam Albani."

Publication date: 21 June 1984
30 illustrations; 260 pages
£8.95 cloth £4.95 paper

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A little learning

Patricia Craig

LYNNE REID BANKS
Maura's Angel
Illustrated by Robin Jacques
124pp. Dent. £6.50.
0460061526

The novels of James Stephens, especially *The Demi-Gods*, set a fashion in Irish fiction for precipitating some supernatural being into an ordinary setting, and making a comedy of manners out of his inability to make sense of everyday matters there. It wasn't only in Ireland, however, that the supernaturally alien character became a colourful fictional device: we remember the queen in E. Nesbit's *The Story of the Amulet*, transported from Ancient Babylon to Edwardian London, and other examples, from which Lynne Reid Banks seems to have learnt very little, show how this particular literary conceit can be used to good effect.

Maura's angel is conjured up by a bomb blast. The book is set in present-day Belfast, with a typically disaffected family at the centre of the theme: father on the run, son in the Maze, eldest daughter retarded, mother exhausted, younger daughter put-upon. The last is Maura, who comes to after an explosion to find a beautiful replica of herself lying naked beside her on the pavement. This strange girl, whom Maura introduces into her own home without exciting undue comment from the rest of the family, answers to the name of Angela. Angela doesn't understand about eating, sleeping or blowing her nose, but she's quick to

pick up these skills once their purpose is explained to her. She's adept, on the other hand, at sensing holiness, and quickly locates this quality in Maura's defective sister Colleen. "She is bright in the soul", is the comment Angela offers when Maura explains that Colleen isn't bright in the head.

There are other embarrassing moments. "Are you - an angel?" Maura inquires when the truth dawns on her, sounding for all the world like an awestruck infant in a Sunday School tract of the mid-Victorian period. Lynne Reid Banks isn't good at conveying the oddity of the situation - "Fancy being homesick - for heaven! I'd take more than a taste of fish-fingers to make up for that!" - and she doesn't show any ingenuity at all in the way she causes it to develop. There is some solemn talk about souls, but very little actually happens in the book.

Lynne Reid Banks, we learn from an article published last August in the *Sunday Telegraph*, spent five days in Belfast with an ordinary Catholic family, observing social conditions and local peculiarities. It wasn't enough. The dialogue of *Maura's Angel* at times recalls Irish amateur theatricals at their most highly coloured: "Why did your da have to go off with the boyos, with never a thought or a backward look at his family? ... What do I care for all his high-flown words when it's himself I'm needin' to help and support me." Plot inadequate, dialect inaccurate, grasp of political complexities not exactly in evidence - this novel illustrates very clearly the dangers of tackling a large theme in a loose way.

Stitches in time

Margaret Jacobson

CLARE CHERRINGTON
Sunshine Island Moonshine Baby
80pp. Collins. £4.95.
0001847767

If a child lies on a beach and her outline is marked with bits of broken china, a Moonshine Baby will glisten on the sand when the moon comes up. This is one of the things that Sarah, convelescing at home after having her tonsils out, learns when she spends some Wednesday evenings with her grandmother's "sewing ladies". At first unwilling, she is persuaded to learn to sew, and in return each lady tells her a story about far-off times and childhood in the West Indies.

We are not told where Sarah herself lives, only that her family "had come from Guyana". The very pleasing black-and-white drawings show us that all the characters are of West Indian origin. The writing is simple and direct but the construction of the book is satisfyingly ingenious. The descriptions of Sarah's everyday life engage our interest as much as the stories which make up the major part of the book.

The exotic background to these stories is

made vivid with talk of fruits, smells, songs, names of places, sunshine - and such is the old ladies' involvement in their story-telling that both the reader and Sarah guess that they are in fact talking about themselves as girls. Annie-Mae, the most beautiful girl in Jamaica (though not above tying together the ribbons of her friends' hats in church) is obviously Mrs Finn, who still looks beautiful when she smiles. Miss Hayes is in a wheelchair now, and she tells Sarah about Mary whose grandfather gave her a donkey. She was then able to get around the small, green island she lived on, in spite of her crippled feet. Mrs Wendell, whose needle moves at great speed, "almost of its own accord", tells a story about Flora, who spent all her time sewing dolls' clothes out of scraps.

Then ordinary life takes over again. Sarah recovers, bids goodbye to the sewing ladies, chooses to play with her friend on Wednesday evenings, and returns to school where "the stories are different ... And besides, sewing was stupid." But stitches-together of a deeper nature, of which Sarah is not wholly aware, have nevertheless taken place. Although we are told that Sarah soon seems to have forgotten the stories, she has been made aware of links between past and present, childhood and adulthood, story and reality, West Indian culture - and that of her present homeland.

Bring them back alive

Neil Philip

JOAN AIKEN
Up the Chimney Down
268pp. Cape. £6.95.
0224021982

"One rainy day when Mrs McMurr had just eaten her last servant (a fat, rebellious boy called Bosseye) she went out looking for a replacement." That sentence, from the title story of this new collection, encapsulates Joan Aiken's technique: a deadpan acceptance of the fantastic, bolstered by a rhythmically robust use of language, and made real by the careful deployment of irrelevant detail. It does not matter that the witch Mrs McMurr's deceased servant was a boy, or that he was fat, or that he was rebellious, still less that he was called Bosseye: but there he is, established unmistakably as himself, in sly parenthesis. Once he is accepted, so is Mrs McMurr, and the twins Clove and Cinnamon who outwit her, and their grandmother Mrs Baker who makes cakes for the winds.

These are quirky stories, and the least satisfactory of them - for example "The Dog on the Roof", in which the author puts a collection of comic stereotypes through their paces - border on the whimsical. The best are those such as "The Rain-Child", in which the fantasy embodies in images a subtle patterning of insight and emotion that cannot be directly expressed.

"The Rain-Child" tells of a young boy who grows up thinking his mother was an apple-tree, his father a shower of rain. Then soldiers come to take him away, telling him he is really a prince, and that he is to be king. He goes to the orchard and hangs his gold chain of office

around the apple-mother's branches, and "Remember me. Oh, please remember me" year later he returns to the orchard: all trees are bearing fruit, save the mother-tree on which there is just one golden apple. "I ger than his two fists doubled together" begs forgiveness, for laying a burden on a tree that a tree cannot bear. "Gently they stroked a smooth branch, and then he put up the nussive gold apple. 'I have come to rest here', he told the tree, 'but you must even more. Winter is coming - the cold and silence will be good for you. They will be of this trouble.'" Both king and tree are comforted, and live long lives; when he does she. It is a tale entirely lucid and calm on its own terms; for lightness of touch and eloquence of implication, it would be last beat.

Even in "The Dog on the Roof" Aiken's zest for language lifts the narrative of the common run. When the decrepit horse Murphy eats himself back to health, coat gleamed like a newly baked bun. "This an odd little fable in this book, 'A Rat Elephant'", which tells of a forest of trees to which only the privileged have access: side that forest, used-up words and litter the ground like dead leaves. Miss Aiken wretchedly outside, "raked up a bag of words, sparkling, tops, pits, fantastic, worst, magic, mystery, holocaust, which unbeatable value, and set fire to them." "I am rubbish ... no use to anyone, and will be". The qualification for entry into the forest of language is that you must take something alive in with you. Joan Aiken has a living imagination, and fetched back the right words to give that imagination its cratic perceptions alluring and durable.

Mirror reading

Margaret Meek

PETER DICKINSON
Giant Cold
Illustrated by Alan E. Cober.
69pp. Gollancz. £4.95.
0575031859

Whether aimed at older or younger readers Peter Dickinson's novels have always been more than eventful narratives, for all the bustle of their well-constructed plots. Below the surface of his chosen time and setting - the present-in-the-future of *The Changes* trilogy, sixth-century Byzantium, Wales, Loch Ness, down an old mine, ancient Egypt, or Tibet after the Boxer Rebellion - there lie puzzles about dreams, second sight, prophecy and magic. Dickinson's poetic imagination thickens what may seem at first to be no more than a straightforward adventure story with the possibility that things may be other.

Now in *Giant Cold*, a beautifully wrought fable of deceptively open prose mirrored in remarkable hair-line drawings by Alan Cober, he deals with the emotional size of childhood, when feelings are immense, and understanding a spark to make sense of the world. If the reader resists the temptation to rush over the early pages to get into the story, and, instead, accepts the narrator's invitation to "play" the text, then the plot becomes an adventure of both thought and feeling.

The opening is all-important, for there the rules of the game are laid out. The publishers have taken care to leave space round the words:

On a holiday island, somebody falling asleep - it might be you.
"Hush, hush," murmurs the sea.
Voices of parents from the next room.
"It's much too far for a child."
"But it's our last day, tomorrow. We mustn't waste it."
The reader and the child protagonist are elided at the end of this argument when the narrator asks "What does it mean, loving someone? How can you get love? Can you keep it?"

Part of the puzzle is who is telling the story. The answer seems to be: the reader, the child protagonist of the story and the storyteller, who appears from time to time to address the reader directly. The reader is in dialogue with the storyteller. He lets "you" hear your parents

bickering in a way that shifts the ground of your certainty. The resulting feeling of uneasiness invades your dreams, so you set out on the golden centre "where all the yammy island has been sucked to", not at the pace of "what happens next", but in a floating dream logic in which to wait, to see and to know are all one. For he has the hints in the conversation with the birds, the volcano, the sunshine and, deeply hidden, the stories which have led you to you of small people who have come giants.

Paraphrasing this story will only do it than justice. Dreams, as Ursula Le Guin must explain themselves. The images of mind's mountains, the sensation of the sick stink of the inside of the sailor's "box", the fear of size, space, uncertainty, are locked into the act of reading. With great subtlety Dickinson has caught the inner speech of combined thought and feeling, the necessary oppositions of understanding before these become ideas to be understood, what the world counts as knowledge.

Talk about the mirror stage, the dream, imagination or other theories. For this remarkable book reveals something that narratologists neglect, notably that children is essentially the time when feeling is understanding and understanding is feeling.

Two shortlists for 1983 children's books have recently been announced by the LCA Association. The four titles shortlisted for Carnegie Medal, which is given to the best standing book written for children, are *Les by Jan Mark (Kestrel)*, *The Way in by Philip Pearce (Kestrel)*, *Whispers by James Watson (Gollancz)*, *Little Fear by Patricia Wrightson (Penguin)*. The final choices for the Kate Greenaway Medal, which is given to the best picture book for children, are *Mollie Bagg by Nine, Eight (Julia MacRae)* and *Foreman for The Saga of Eric the Viking by Terry Jones (Pavilion)*. The winners will be announced on June 8.

This year's Eleanor Farjeon Award, made for "distinguished services to children and books", has been awarded to Hughes.

The bardy's penance

Frank Williams

ALEXANDER GALICH
Songs and Poems
Translated by G.S. Smith
203pp. Ann Arbor: Ardis. \$20.
0882339524

As soon as the match between Kasparov and Korchnoi in London last December was over, the victorious young Soviet Grand Master was interviewed by *Izvestiya*. Among other things, he was asked how had he filled his spare time? Between games, Kasparov replied, he had listened to music, especially tapes of Vladimir Vysotsky. With this remark, Kasparov publicly joined the tens of millions of Vysotsky devotees in the Soviet Union. It was also a mark of the enormous and continuing power of the "bardy" (as chansonniers are known in Russian) in Soviet life, even though the greatest exponents of the art, Vysotsky and Alexander Galich, are now dead. Bulat Okudzhava, who launched the whole phenomenon, hung up his guitar several years ago to devote himself to the writing of painstaking historical novels.

The "bardy" were a product of the Thaw, of the longing to hear an individual voice speaking honestly and openly. After the bombast and mindless optimism of Stalinist Socialist Realism, nothing could have been more disarming than a poet singing his own words, words worth listening to, to his own simple guitar accompaniment. As Sinyavsky says, "the song became the air we breathed". Communication between performer and his audience was on a direct personal level, and the natural ambience for a performance was a private flat, or a gathering round a tape recorder for the less privileged. Concert halls were rarely available, and Galich only once gave a concert before a large audience, in Novosibirsk in 1968. It was by all accounts a moving occasion.

Of the "bardy", Galich was the most outspoken in his songs. Indeed his biography represents an almost classic example of the Soviet intelligentsia's rejection of the regime's values in the wake of Khrushchev's admittedly partial revelations, of the determination to stand up for human rights whatever the cost in terms of career, privileges and material advantages. Galich had much to lose. A successful play and script-writer, a member of the Writers' and Cinematographers' Unions, he had his entry in the *Literary Encyclopedia* and enjoyed the luxury of trips to the capitalist West. By the early 1960s, however, he had had enough of time-serving and began to compose his songs, instantly reaching a level of distinction totally absent from his officially recognized, run-of-the-mill work for stage and screen.

In Galich's songs, the listener was confronted with all the frustrations and hypocrisy of Soviet everyday life, above all with the experience of the camps. The song "Clouds" caught that bitter experience so perfectly that it entered folklore, and was at one point reported to have originated in the camps of Kolyma. Galich was, as Bukovsky recalled later, the favourite of the inhabitants of Gulag: "The first question put to every new arrival was 'What new Galich songs have you brought?'". Yet, though Galich's family, like every other Soviet family, had suffered during the Purges, Galich himself had never been touched, and his songs were an act of penance on behalf of all those who had come through the Stalin years intact. Indeed, the guilty conscience of a Soviet poet seems to have been the driving force behind his mordant satires. Self-disgust is only too apparent in the songs in which he deals with the literary profession, like "B.L. Pasternak in Memoriam", a frank examination of one of Soviet literature's most shameful hours - "They dismantled the wreaths to make yard-brooms. For about half an hour we long faces; We contemporaries, we're so proud of it - It was home in his bed he departed!"

For a few years Galich managed to lead a double life, retaining his position in official culture while his sympathies were entirely on the side of his opponents.

There's no hall, no red-plush auditorium, And no swooning clique to clap uproariously, Just an ordinary tape recorder, but it's sufficient, there's no need for more than that. In 1968 came the point of no return. During August Galich was working on "Petersburg Romance", a reflection of the Decembrist

uprising and its meaning for the human rights movement. On hearing the news of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Raisa Orlova recalled, he added a further stanza - "Things don't get more straightforward, Our age puts us on trial - There's the square - will you go out, There's the square - dare you go out, There's the square - will you go out, There's the square - dare you go out When the right time arrives?"

Two days after Galich added those lines, five young people did go out - into Moscow's Red Square, and demonstrated against the Soviet intervention. Galich was perfectly in tune with his time.

In retrospect, everything that happened subsequently is predictable. His songs were published abroad, and he came under increasing pressure that led first to his expulsion from the Unions, in 1971, and then to his unwilling emigration in 1974. But he did not lose touch with his audience, broadcasting to the Soviet Union on Radio Liberty. He was working on a new series for them when he accidentally electrocuted himself in Paris in December 1977.

Galich's translator, G.S. Smith, has made his selection largely from work written before Galich emigrated, focusing in particular on the songs of the 1960s. This choice is motivated by Smith's belief that the later work is more abstract and lacks the satirical bite of the songs written when Galich was still torn between two worlds.

The translator faces formidable problems. Galich astonished his listeners with his pithy and absolutely contemporary use of language. His songs are crammed with jargon and incident, much of which would be incomprehensible without extensive notes. Smith has removed inessential details to make versions which follow the original as closely as possible and still retain, as he puts it, their singability. These are translations designed to come across in performance, and, to prove the point, two musical examples are included at the end. The results are surprisingly good, and a song like "Clouds" retains the terrible simplicity of the original. But Smith's pursuit of fidelity has entailed a significant loss. The conversational earthiness of Galich's verse has been rendered by a more anaemic English and it reads perhaps more politely than in the original. In every other respect, however, metre, intonation, the nuances of meaning which a Soviet listener seizes so readily - the songs come over with superb clarity.

Straight to the point

Dennis Deletant

MARIN SORESCU
Selected Poems
Translated by Michael Hamburger
93pp. Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe. £3.50.
0906427487

By contrast with the sterility of the preceding decade, the 1960s were a period of remarkable fecundity in Romanian literature. The release of several thousand political prisoners in the spring and summer of 1964 signalled a relaxation of the Romanian regime's limits of tolerance, and this was rapidly reflected in the country's life. Censorship became less rigid, thus permitting a clutch of young poets to emerge. Among them were Ioan Alexandru, Ana Blandiana, Nichita Stănescu (who died in December of last year) and Marin Sorescu. They were joined later by a group of older poets such as Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, Alexandru Baconescu, Ion Caraion and Ion Negoițescu who came to maturity during the Stalinist era, when they could only write "for the drawer".

The revival of Romanian poetry was completed by the rehabilitation of three major figures who had established themselves before the war and who died on the eve of their official reacceptance: Ion Barbu, Lucian Blaga and Vasile Voiculescu.

Marin Sorescu (born in 1936 in Otlenia) made his debut in 1964 with a book of verse parodies and pastiches entitled *Singur printre poezii* (Alone among the poets). His first major

Purest Dacian

Virgil Nemoianu

EUGEN TODORAN
M. Eminescu: Epopeea română
399pp. Iasi: Junimea.

M. Eminescu is one of those Romantics who arrived late, at the end of the feast, just before the beginnings of the symbolist movement. The Romanian public embraced him early and for its own reasons. Eminescu had moulded the literary language into an elegant and serviceable tool, and had produced a body of "Victorian" poetry much to the public's liking - allegorical, gently moral and sentimentally pessimistic. Several decades after the poet's death in 1889, however, it was discovered that among his many unpublished manuscripts there were poems of great mythical scope, which in their imagery and visionary profundity seemed to surpass those published in Eminescu's lifetime and to represent him more fully, bringing him closer to the genuine Romantic tradition.

A second turning-point in his reputation is now taking place, as his philosophical speculations and other theoretical writings begin to be published and interpreted. Eminescu had a lively mind. During his years of study in Berlin and Vienna he had read voraciously and had filled dozens of notebooks with miscellaneous comments and bits of information on everything from algebra and biology to literature and theology. In the later 1870s and early 1880s he worked as a journalist for a conservative newspaper and engaged in an immoderate and xenophobic nationalism. The publication and interpretation of his notes and prose writings present formidable scholarly as well as political difficulties in the present repressive ideological climate in Romania. It is too early to decide whether all this material will prove that Eminescu is a kind of local Leonardo da Vinci (as was suggested by the philosopher C. Noica (one of the driving forces in the revaluation of Eminescu's prose). I think it is rather unlikely, but at least we will get a better picture of someone who decisively shaped the ethical imagination of a whole community by voicing in an exemplary fashion its self-awareness.

The discussion of his prose has also led to a renewed interest in the mythical framework of Eminescu's vast unfinished poems. In them he tried to provide a substitute national myth formed from a combination of folk imagery and Romantic philosophy. He describes how

the universe took shape from the lamentations of the universal or divine self-consciousness at its loneliness, thus creating the world literally as a vale of tears. Twenty huge cantos were to portray world history as a panorama of ephemeral vanities. In this vision each historical era had its own original sin as its motive force and looked back with nostalgia to a preceding age, as to a lost paradise. The main consolation is the relative lack of reality of all these scenes. They are the dreams of a sorrowful divinity and could equally well be the imaginings or ravings of the poet of genius.

Eminescu was obsessed by one of these historical tableaux above all others and returned to it time and again. This was the image of a pristine Dacia untouched by the Roman legions, or by the later corrupt influences of the West. His haunting evocations of a crystalline and luxuriant Eden are among the best poetry ever written in Romanian and can easily hold their own among the finest visionary poetry of Europe. Subsequent moments in medieval Romanian history are presented as echoes of an original moment of fullness and purity; thus history becomes, at its best, an escape from history. The fragments and images of Eminescu's mythic epos speak of the thirst for paradise and the anxiety induced by reality which suffuse the emerging Romanian culture. Their powerful impact shows how clearly he perceived and formulated these emotions, which his poetry intensifies as well as making them available for less exalted uses.

The legacy of Eminescu was not always a happy one; his verbal genius lent a vicarious credibility to all those who tried for a hundred years or more to cut the country loose from the Western, rationalist moorings it had recently regained. Eugen Todoran, a professor at the University of Timisoara, and a recognized authority on Eminescu, describes well the various Romantic and folk-mythical sources of his poetry and evaluates its merit; but he avoids discussion of its social implications, for the good reason perhaps that any frank incursion into political philosophy would be hazardous in present-day Romania. This is a pity all the same, because Eminescu's complex mind foresaw dilemmas that still face this outer limb of the European trunk, and to have aired them here would have a beneficial effect not only for Romanians, but also for our general understanding of the shock of modernity on the psyche of developing communities, and of the way in which they build defences against it and find compensations.

one another and
emit our thanks
through our noses.

A cigarette when you're born,
another when you go to school,
yet another for your wedding;
a cigarette because it's raining,
and because it isn't raining,
another...

You don't even notice
how in no time like this
with cheap tobacco
you've blown
your life's work away.

Michael Hamburger has made his selection from the volumes *Poeme* (Poems), *Moartea cerșului* (The Death of the Clerk), *Tineretea lui Don Quijote* (Don Quixote's Youth), *Tuși* (Cough!), *Suflete, bun la toate* (Soul, you good for anything). Often the poems are based on a premise which is destroyed by a paradoxical "punch-line", an unexpected syllogism that succeeds in conveying a truth. Although the translations are based in part on Oskar Pastior's German versions of Sorescu's verse, virtually nothing of the stark, dead-pan original has been lost. Greater demands on translator and reader are made by the poet's more recent two-volume cycle, *La Liliac* (At Lilied), which Hamburger has wisely avoided. The elliptical popular speech of the poet's native Otlenia gives this cycle its charm and represents a fresh departure. Yet it is with his "ironic verse fables" (to use Hamburger's apt description) that Sorescu has created a new style in Romanian poetry.

To the dead
sternly seems
longer
because they're forbidden
to smoke.
We living people puff
take a light from

Out of Time

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£3.95 370 30532 9

The Bodley Head

Paperbacks

Biography and memoirs

FRANK RICHARDS. *Old Soldiers Never Die*. 324pp. Anthony Mott. £14.95. 0 907746 28 4. *Old Soldier Sahib*. 341pp. Anthony Mott. £14.95. 0 907746 27 6. *Old Soldiers Never Die*, Frank Richards's classic account of life in the trenches during the Great War, was first published in 1933, a year or two after the memoirs of Blunden, Charles Carrington, Graves and Sassoon. Both Graves and Sassoon served with the Second Battalion, the Royal Welch Fusiliers, the unit in which Richards enlisted as a private soldier in 1901, serving seven years in India (his experiences there are recounted in *Old Soldier Sahib*, which appeared in 1936 and was reviewed in the *TLS* of April 4 that year). In 1914, at the age of thirty, he was recalled from the South Wales pits to take part with the battalion in the Retreat (or "Retirement", as he calls it) from Mons, remaining thereafter a front-line soldier throughout the war, most of the time in his old trade of company signaller, and consistently refusing promotion. He fought at First Ypres, Loos, the Somme, Arras and Third Ypres, and was awarded the DCM and the MM. His vivid anecdotal story, composed, with Graves's encouragement, fifteen or more years after the event, encompasses all the aspects of the

heroic myth: mud, barbed wire, shelling, rats, lice, hairbreadth survival, the mounds of dead (here, on one occasion, used to build up the parapet), regimental pride. But in place of tragedy, lyricism, even romanticism, is a tough survivor's philosophy, the kind of earthy working-class pragmatism (modifying to old-soldier's williness) that had no time for cowardice or incompetence or foreigners and radiates a sceptical aura about the amateurism of his young officers – although he usually writes politely about them: "Young Mr Graves worked like a Trojan"; "Two new officers that had just arrived seemed of a better stamp . . . one named Mr. Sassoon . . . was soon very popular with the men."

J. K. L. W.

EDWARD GIBBON. *Memoirs of My Own Life*. Edited with an introduction by Betty Radice. 238pp. Penguin. £2.50. 0 14 043217 5. *If the theme of Gibbon's History is the Fall of Rome, the theme of his Memoirs is his own rise as Rome's historian, and it is as a historian, cool and exact, that he promises at the outset that he will write: "Truth, naked unblushing truth, the first virtue of more serious history, must be the sole recommendation of this personal narrative . . . Which is somewhat overstating it: urbanity, not rash disclosure is what we go to*

Gibbon for and what he warily provides in this ideal eighteenth-century document, informed by its author's benign and rational fatalism. This Penguin edition is based on that by G. A. Bonnard, now apparently, and scandalously, out of print; it is well introduced and usefully annotated. Betty Radice has, on the other hand, changed Gibbon's spelling, punctuation and paragraphing, to avoid "quaintness"; editing here becomes interfering, and as a consequence the *Memoirs* are no longer quite of their time.

J. S.

HAROLD NICOLSON. *Diaries and Letters 1930-1964*. Edited by Stanley Olson. 436pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 057005 5. This abridged edition is one more manifestation of the *Diaries and Letters* which originally appeared in three volumes (1966-68) and in a hardback condensed version (1980). According to Nigel Nicolson, Harold Nicolson found it depressing to think that he would be remembered more for his diaries than for the forty books he published in his lifetime. He might, however, have been mollified by the amount, reaching almost Bloomsburian proportions, that has now been published about the various aspects of his life. What little we were ignorant of can be fleshed out by Nicolson's own record of his momentous life. As social history this is fascinating though why Nicolson was held in such esteem remains something of a mystery. He emerges as charming ("charming" is a frequent epithet, applied to, among others, Bernard Berenson and De Gaulle), well-connected, untiringly civilized and urbane; his anecdotes falling decorously flat and his accounts of the famous appearing somewhat self-conscious. Some of his judgments are cruelly exposed by hindsight: (of Churchill's "blood, sweat and tears" speech, "Winston makes a very short statement, but to the point"; of *Lolita*, "I am writing to you about *Lolita* which Vita and I have just read. We do not feel that its literary merits justify in any way the obscenity which underlies the whole book.") The one-volume *Diaries and Letters* was first reviewed in the *TLS* on November 14, 1980.

L. D.

Classical studies

M. I. PINLEY (Editor). *The Legacy of Greece*. 479pp. Oxford University Press. £4.95. 0 19 285136 5. *Like its eponymous ancestor* (edited by Sir Richard Livingstone and published in 1921), Sir Moses Pinley's book is a collection of essays on leading aspects of Greek culture – but more than this, they aim "to examine what later ages, down to our own, have made of the inheritance from the Greeks". So at least their editor claims; but in fact, although some of them ("Homer and the Epic" and "Lyric and Other Poetry", for example) are dull and inevitably a little hackneyed, and others ("Political Theory" and "Myth") are badly written, they are in general much more successful at boiling down for the benefit of the common reader the current orthodoxy in some field of classical studies than they are at grappling with these tough questions in the history of ideas. Professor Rosenmeyer's essay on drama is perhaps the only one which fully reveals the breadth of learning which the editorial directive required, while some others (notably those on philosophy and architecture) are so modish as to be practically useless even as fodder for beginners. Taking all in all, the best essays turn out to be two which concentrate simply on opening up a difficult area to the layman, "Science and Mathematics" by G. E. R. Lloyd and "Greek Philosophy and Christianity" by A. H. Armstrong. *The Legacy of Greece* was first published in 1982 and reviewed in the *TLS* of July 2 that year.

K. A. McC.

Criticism

VITTORIO BRANCA. *Boccaccio: The Man and His Works*. Translated by Richard Monges. 341pp. New York University Press. \$14. 0 8174 10557. *First published in 1976 and reviewed in the TLS of November 26, that year: "In this series of biographical literary essays the author illuminates the multiple influences on Boccaccio's formation from his boyhood in Certaldo through adolescence in Naples on the fringes of Robert's court, to his return to the very different atmosphere of Florence, his first*

encounter with Petrarch, his subsequent missions and lectures and final withdrawal to Certaldo. This precisely documented account in ten chapters deals briefly along the way with Boccaccio's minor works in Italian and his learned writings in Latin. Part Two contains four essays on the *Decameron*, which deal in detail with both the matter and style of the 'mercantile epic'. Unfortunately the translation is clumsy and not always intelligible."

History

RICHARD BARBER. *The Pastons. The Letters of a Family in The Wars of the Roses, 1480-1509*. Folio Society edition of 1981. The previous edition was edited by Norman Davis, published by Oxford University Press in 1958 and reviewed in the *TLS* of August 8 that year. Richard Barber has been very free in modernizing the Letters, the selection is well thought-out and the lucidity of his linking commentary makes this an excellent edition for them in as a story. He makes clear both the involved family and legal affairs, and the political chronicle behind them, in a very readable way. But much more is lost by his modernization than linguistic interest. Their earthenness diminished, and distinction of character heightened. With a relatively severe man like Paston I, not much is lost, even when he writes too much like him. The lovers, Richard Cok and Margery Brews, still come across as touch us, though it is a pity that Margery's sweet and stumbling verses should be taken even of their rhyme. The person who suffers is Margaret Paston, whose wit and humour is almost entirely ironed out (when she remarks that her pregnancy makes her too *feys*, i.e. "trim", for a girl, Barber renders it "fat", though this is the most dramatic example). Among modernized texts, Norman Davis's *World's Classics* selection of the individuality of the people: read Barber the story of a family.

Language

ANTHONY BURGESS. *Language Made Plain*. 206pp. Fontana. £2.50. 0 00 654063 1. *First published by the English Universities Press in 1964 and reviewed in the TLS of April 23 that year. The reviewer wrote: "This is an alternative book written by a man of letters who has ideas about the importance of language in our changing world and who has had exceptional wide opportunities of observing language in action . . . He has managed to acquire a working knowledge of the great languages, including Russian, Chinese and Malay. He states his thesis in plain terms: 'As the world changes, the need for every educated man and woman to know foreign languages grows more urgent, we have to devise techniques for learning them quickly and accurately. Our best beginning is an examination of the nature of language itself.' Accordingly he arranges his book in the well-balanced parts: nine chapters on language in general and nine on languages in particular."*

Psychology

HADLEY CANTRELL. *The Invasion from Mars*. 224pp. Princeton University Press. £4.95. 0 69 02827 3. *First published in 1940 and reviewed in the TLS of October 12 that year. On Halloween night 1938 Orson Welles made Mercury Theatre on the Air present an adaptation of H. G. Wells's War of the Worlds. It was so realistic – it had the Martians landing in New Jersey – that it seriously frightened at least a million Americans; thousands were genuinely panic stricken; others found something to enjoy in it: "the broadcast had no worried but I knew it would scare at least a few years' life out of my mother-in-law." Hadley Cantrell's "Study in the Psychology of Panic" was launched immediately afterwards, and his book *The Invasion from Mars*, which includes the complete text of the Orson Welles broadcast, he recorded and compared a wide variety of heroic, kooky, poignant and grotesque all wonderfully trivial reactions to the prospect of imminent annihilation at the hands of whatever) of the aliens: "My only thought was a relief that if it spread to Shanghai it would not have to pay the butcher's bill."*

Evidence of success

Stanley Weintraub

DAN H. LAURENCE. *Bernard Shaw: A Bibliography: Volumes One and Two*. 1,058pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £80. 0 1918179 5

On the eve of Bernard Shaw's ninety-second birthday, in 1948, he cabled a West African newspaper a correction to its notice of his death. It was "premature", he announced: "I am only half dead. Please contradict." Since the declaration was intended for publication, and indeed was printed – and reprinted – it appears in the second of Dan H. Laurence's two bibliographical volumes, which, implicitly, suggest that Shaw is still far from dead.

"Public Shaw" emerges in all his multifaceted complexity in *Bernard Shaw: A Bibliography*, which is, in effect, a bibliography in bibliographical format. Thirty years in preparation, its thousand-odd pages do more than record detailed descriptions of first editions of books and first appearances of newspaper pieces. Every kind of print medium, from rough proofs and rehearsal copies of plays to pamphlets, programme inserts, press releases, appeals, addresses, manifestos, book blurbs and Shaw's once-famous ready-answer postcards, is included. Further, Laurence adds Shaw on records and in radio talks, locates major manuscripts and identifies dozens of Shaw's inimitable self-drafted interviews.

In order of appearance in print are descriptions of over three hundred separately published books (plus each of their variants), fly-sheets, leaflets and papers, from multi-volumed editions (and their contents) to London County Council election campaign hand-outs (Shaw lost). These fill nearly a volume in themselves, while the almost four thousand contributions to periodicals comprise the bulk of the second volume. The public Shaw was tireless, and Laurence equals that industry in describing not only the physical details of first editions, but – where possible – their sometimes unexpected publishing history, from the number of copies printed, and prices, to the number of copies pulped, or metamorphosed into other formats, from servicemen's paperbacks to acting editions.

We discover how many unbound, warehouse sheets of Shaw's books were destroyed by a single Luftwaffe incendiary bomb on September 18, 1940 – 86,700 – and even how much of each title was lost. We learn why Shaw had one small book priced on the cover as "one florin" ("Two shillings looks and sounds cheap and nasty, but Florin is Apostolically Imperial and attractively novel"). And we encounter dozens of ephemeral publications written for others and published under their names, such as James Timewell's *The Police and the Public*, on the 1898 Southwark "police business", and at least one book under Shaw's name which we are assured he did not write – the spurious love poems to Ellen Terry claimed for G.B.S. as recently as 1980.

The 3,975 periodical contributions listed – and there will be more, as a bibliography can never be completed – are a continuously fascinating record of Shaw's reputation as well as of his working life. A letter to the editor of an obscure New York paper reports Shaw's exasperation over the arrest of a Detroit man for reading his mildly heretical 1880s novel *An Unsocial Socialist* in a greycar. A self-drafted interview, intended to create interest in the first production of *Arms and the Man*, in 1894, and attributed to "The extra special Star man who is retained for the sole purpose of interviewing Mr Bernard Shaw on great occasions", is headed "Terrible Scenes at the Avenue Theatre". Soon after, Shaw is able to publish, in an American magazine, "How to Become a Man of Genius" – and in London a few years later, under his discarded music critic *nom de plume*, "Corno di Bassetto", he reveals "What It Feels Like to be Successful".

By 1905 we find Shaw announcing his outrage at the banning, by an American library, of *Mrs Warren's Profession*, and describing "American prudery" ("Comstockery", in his term, after Anthony Comstock, of the Society for the Suppression of Vice) as the "World's Standing Joke". Yet the next year, a produc-

tion of the play having survived a court test in New York at a time when the Lord Chamberlain's censorship would keep *Mrs Warren* from public performance in England for twenty further years, we observe Shaw drafting a statement for the press that America was "kinder than Britain".

Shaw remained of endless interest to the press through the decades. A self-drafted interview reports "Just What Mr Shaw Eats and Drinks", and a partial transcript of a lecture is headed, "Shaw Admits Guilt as Man of Wealth". Every word he offers appears publishable – on doctors, Darwin, private schools, celebrity status, Christmas, prisons, sound films, dancing the tango, smoking, prize-fighting, flying, motor travel, atomic bombs, the Abolition, interracial marriage, nudism, Irish Republicanism.

In his nineteenth year Shaw published "Sixty Years in Business as an Author". For his ninety-third birthday he announced in a questionnaire interview in the *Daily Mail* that he was in his "second childhood" and expected to "go on forever" – a statement meant in his usual manner to be more provocative than accurate, for he was still making good sense in print on most things (Stalin excepted), from public prayer and play production to old age pensions and the new Indian constitution. His last playlet, *Why She Would Not*, would appear after his death, as would his last article, "We Sing Better than Our Grandparents!" But for Laurence the recording of posthumously published Shaw goes on into the 1980s, as it will go on beyond that, for G.B.S. left behind multifarious writings still being mined.

Laurence's systematic formulas appear derived not only from other recent volumes in the distinguished Soho Bibliographies series, but from Richard Purdy's 1954 *Thomas Hardy* (done independently and lacking the handy Soho coding, that remains nevertheless a model work). The element missing in *Shaw*, a section which appears in the 1979 Soho *Edmund Blunden*, is "Translations into Foreign Languages". In *Shaw*, references to appearances in foreign journals, newspapers and books occur only when they are the first publication in any language. Thus *Zu Wahr um Schön zu sein* and *Trappo Vera per esser Buono* are described before *Too True to be Good* emerges into print; and *Androklus und der Löwe* and *Androcles y el León* emerge before the English text, which did not appear separately, but was

packaged three years later with *Overruled and Pygmalion*. Such guidelines eliminate publications about which someone, somewhere, might want to know, but make sense in relation to the gamut of languages into which Shaw has been translated, often in bulk, for nearly a century.

Another limitation restricts the description of Shaw's published correspondence to those instances (other than collections and separate printings) of letters "intended for publication, though written in a seemingly private capacity". Hundreds – if not thousands – of letters and extracts thus fall into the cracks between categories, despite having appeared in books, periodicals and especially in the sale catalogues which often remain the only record of the printed word. (References to auction and sale catalogues are used on occasion, however, to furnish the publishing history and provenance of some printed writings.)

Omissions and minor flaws are bound to exist in so complex a work. Shaw's shorthand diary of 1885-97 records a few appearances in periodicals untraced by Laurence. Some unsigned pieces which suggest Shaw's hand are cautiously left out of the listings, perhaps because Shaw retained no copy of them in his cuttings books, in which he usually preserved his magazine and newspaper appearances. Evidence of further self-drafted interviews continue to turn up, as is inevitable, given Shaw's penchant for such indirect self-promotion. Additional separately published leaflets and broadsides will enter the canon, some published anonymously, often under pseudonyms or under multiple authorship. It is unlikely that these will alter the picture to any significant degree, and Laurence even suggests a few possibilities himself in a tantalizing section he calls "Wraiths and Strays". Since Shaw's hand even appeared, usually without attribution, in the works of dozens of his friends and colleagues, identification of further such participation by his restless pen is likely as their papers continue to be explored.

For scholars, *Bernard Shaw: A Bibliography* will be a resource for Shaw and his times to which the much abused word "definitive" rightly applies. Because of the interest in its subject as a personality, and the copious, if necessarily brief, quotations from (and about) thousands of Shavian writings, it has the potential to become that rarest of publications, a bibliography with the appeal of a bedside book.

Slim leavings

B. C. Bloomfield

J. HOWARD WOOLMER. *Malcolm Lowry: A bibliography*. 183pp. Revere, PA: Woolmer/Brotherson (distributed in the UK by St Paul's Bibliographies). £18. 0913506 12 5

Malcolm Lowry was born in Birkenhead in 1909 and died in Sussex in 1956 aged forty-seven. Before his death he published two novels, three contributions to collective works (apart from anthologies and publicity blurbs) and some fifty contributions to various periodicals, about half of them school and university journals. Following his death a number of works previously written found a publisher and his writings attained popularity posthumously; this must be the reason for a full-scale bibliography of a writer with so slender an output.

J. Howard Woolmer previously published a check-list of the early books of the Hogarth Press, and was apparently introduced to Lowry's *Under the Volcano* by his co-publisher. The bibliography is conventionally divided into section A (books by Lowry), B (works with contributions by Lowry), C (periodical and journal articles by Lowry), D (translations), E (radio, film and television items), F (song lyrics) and G (recordings). There is an index and the book is well produced on excellent paper and strongly bound. Woolmer excludes criticism and secondary work as it has already been dealt with in W. H. New's *Malcolm Lowry: A reference guide* (1978). This is a competent piece of work, with any

weaknesses found in section A. Woolmer seems to think that bibliographers follow various methods of description and set criteria for inclusion solely by prejudice. He should read Tanselle's article "The arrangement of descriptive bibliographies" in *Studies in Bibliography*, 37 (1984), reflect on his own practices and wonder whether the inclusion of collational formulae, a more systematic pursuit of printing numbers (from printers as well as from publishers) and a consistent use of the ISCC-NBS Centroid Color charts might not also improve this and any future work.

Woolmer does not transcribe title-pages; he reproduces them in facsimile, and often verbatim as well, but without indicating original page measurements except in the body of the descriptive notes. Cloth-bound books also often get fuller descriptions than those paperbound. It is confusing to find listed as Item A10 what appears simply to be a separately issued advance chapter from the book *October Ferry to Gabrola*, which is designated A11. I also find it difficult to justify the inclusion in section C of auctioneers' and booksellers' catalogues, but no doubt all will be useful to someone. Section F, which lists both Lowry's song lyrics and reproduces the covers of the published versions, is most curious and nostalgic. A colour plate reproduces the dust-jacket of Lowry's first book, *Ultramarine*. From a copy in the University of British Columbia Library; unfortunately the scale of reduction is not cited and the exemplar is imperfect. It points up, however, another curiosity of Lowry's career: he lived from 1939 for fourteen years in Dallara, British Columbia, and his work has become a part of the curriculum for those who study Canadian literature.

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